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THE LIFE

OF

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PREFACE.

IT is a hundred and fifty years since Dr. Humphrey Prideaux, dean of Norwich, undertook to write a history of the ruin of the eastern church, from the death of the emperor Maurice, in 602, to the fall of the Saracen empire, in 936. In that history, it was the purpose of the learned writer to give an account of the controversies which distracted the eastern churches, and then to trace the calamities brought upon them by the Mohammedan tyranny and delusion. The former part of his work he abandoned; but out of the latter portion he extracted the particulars which are contained in his "Life of Mohammed." In that compilation he appears to have carefully consulted the Arabian authors, and the principal

Christian writers who had preceded him ; but his strong prejudices against Mohammed are so violently expressed, that it can scarcely be relied on as impartial. Another Life of Mohammed was written, in French, by count Boulainvilliers, whose prejudices were quite as strong as those of Dr. Prideaux, in an opposite direction. Besides these, there are two works by M. Gagnier, one in French and the other in Latin, which contain the substance of the Arabic Lives by Abu'lfeda, prince of Hamah, in Syria, in the fourteenth century, and by Al Jannabi, who visited Mecca in 1556. These Arabian biographers lived several centuries after the death of Mohammed ; their works contain, however, both the written and the oral traditions of the inhabitants of Mecca ; and the main facts are authenticated by monuments preserved by early Christian writers.

The basis of the entire history is the Korân, which has been translated into English, with a learned Preliminary Dissertation, and copious notes, chiefly taken from Pocock, by Mr. Sale.

Much use is made, in the following biography, of the "*Historia Orientalis*," by Hottinger; in which the learned professor fully discusses, with the aid of the best oriental collections, every question relating to the subject.

The fifteenth chapter of Gibbon has embodied, in his usual splendid manner, the leading facts in the Life of Mohammed; but the same tone of scepticism, and of occasional indecency, which disgraces other portions of his history, is so prominent, that no friend of truth or morality can read it without humiliation and even disgust.

Nearly all the materials of the Life of Mohammed are brought together in the first volume of the Modern Part of the Universal History, in a style which repels by its want of taste or elegant arrangement.

The description of Arabia may be verified by consulting the travels of Niebuhr and of Burckhardt. Of the institutions of Mohammed and the history of the Saracenic empire, an interesting sketch will be found in Mill's History

of Mohammedanism. Mr. Lane has largely contributed to the illustration of Arabian antiquities in his travels, and in his exquisite notes to the translation of "The Thousand and One Nights." The reader of the Bible will be well prepared for many of the most striking orientalisms by the poetical books of Scripture, particularly the Book of Job.

In the following pages, the reader is introduced to the distant region in which Mohammed lived, and to the state of both the eastern and the western nations at that period. No anxiety has been felt either to unveil an impostor, or to paint a hero. The story of one of the most remarkable men in the world is told with a conscientious regard to what is believed to be the truth.

At this day, Mohammed is said to be revered as the prophet of God by one hundred and eighty millions of the human family. If there were no other reason, this would be enough to awaken our curiosity. We cannot but desire to know something of the origin of a dominion

which has spread so widely, and of which the foundation has been so strongly laid in so many minds; and especially to know something of the genius and character, the principles and the conduct, of the man who set it up. It is the only example, in the history of the world, of a conqueror being the founder of a religion. This religion has flourished in the most populous and civilized nations of Asia and Africa for more than twelve hundred years, in some of which nations Christianity had been planted by the apostles. To see wherein Mohammedanism resembles other religions, and wherein it differs from them;—to understand its principal doctrines and ceremonies; to trace the means by which it has been spread; and to judge of the effects which it has produced; would require a dissertation too elaborate, and a history too lengthened, for either the design or the limits of the present undertaking; but, so far as the writer knows, more information respecting the life of Mohammed will be found in these pages than anywhere else in the same compass.

A principal evil of more voluminous works lies in their descriptions of the excessive sensuality of Mohammed's habits. A large portion of his life is necessarily passed over in the following pages; since no gratification of curiosity can be worth risking the perpetual shock of the moral feelings of every virtuous mind, which must attend the full narration of such a history. To apologize for such omissions, would be only less disgraceful than to supply them.

THE
LIFE OF MOHAMMED.

CHAPTER I.

DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF ARABIA.

ARABIA is a peninsula of Asia, said to be as large as Germany, Spain, France, and Italy. It is bounded on the west by the Red Sea, on the north by Syria and the Euphrates, on the east by the Persian Gulf, and on the south by the Indian Ocean. This country is called by the natives *Jezeerah al Arab* (the peninsula of the Arab) and by the Turks and Persians, *Arabistan*. The oriental historians derive the name from Yareb, son of Joktan, whom they regard as the founder of the kingdom of Yemen; but it is probable that the true origin of the name is in the Hebrew word for a desert—which is the state of a great part of the country. Its greatest length is fourteen hundred

geographical miles, and its greatest breadth is eleven hundred and fifty. The shape is that of an irregular triangle, inclosing an area of about eleven hundred thousand square miles. It was divided by the ancient geographers into three portions:—1, *Arabia Deserta*, the country of the ancient Nabatheans, and the people of Kedar, and of the modern Bedouins, including the land of Uz, and the city of Petra; 2, *Arabia Felix*, or *the Happy*, including the fruitful and well-peopled regions of the south and west; 3, *Arabia Petræa*, or *Rocky*, the country lying between Palestine and Egypt, south of the Dead Sea, and occupied by the Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, and Amalekites. The general surface of Arabia is flat and dry. The desolation is broken, in some parts, by high mountains, embosoming luxuriant valleys, and, in others, by oases of great fertility and beauty. One range of mountains begins at Suez, and runs nearly parallel with the Red Sea, at distances varying from thirty to eighty miles; the mountains of Ommar, in the east, appear to be a continuation of those of Persia; the mountains of Safa, in the province of Hedjaz, are famous for their balm; the mountains of Shammar, in Nedjed, for their forests and vil-

lages. Gazovan is always covered with snow; and Horeb and Sinai, between the gulfs of Suez and Akaba, at the northern extremity of the Red Sea, are familiar to the readers of the Bible. Arabia is scantily supplied with rivers. A small part of its northern boundary is watered by the Euphrates. The torrents which rush down the mountains in the rainy season, are lost in the *wadies*, or sandy plains. Near Sana, in the khalifate of Hadramaut, is a shallow stream, which falls into the Indian Ocean; and the Prin flows through part of the desert Mahra. The inhabitants of the mountain regions bordering the Indian Ocean are enriched by the periodical rains during the hot months; the less favoured regions are refreshed by the heavy dews which fall in the night; the deserts have their springs, which are known to the experienced traveller; and, by the aid of aqueducts and cisterns, their cities are supplied with water. The miseries of the desert between Mecca and Bagdad are heightened by the *samiel*, or hot blast, which suffocates the traveller. Though a large portion of Arabia consists of scorched and barren plains, these are not entirely without such plants as can be eaten by the camels. The mountains and valleys

abound in great varieties of rare or useful productions—the castor oil plant, senna, the tamarind, and the coffee shrub, the acacia, from which the gum arabic is extracted, the fragrant *kadi*, the balm-tree, dates, and coconuts, the fig, the lemon, the orange, the melon, and the cucumber, with great variety of other fruits—almonds, peaches, pears, and filberts. The most common article of food is a coarse millet, called dhurra. The horses are fed with beans and barley. The hills of Arabia Petræa are inhabited by goats, hyænas, panthers, jackals, wolves, ounces, bears, and monkeys. The gazelle, the antelope, and the jerboa, have their dwelling in the desert. Sheep and oxen are tended for their flesh.

The fame of the Arabian horse is universal; one breed is used for burdens, and a higher breed, singularly swift, docile, and hardy, is kept for riding—sharing the same tent with the rider, and treated as tenderly as his children. The camel is the wealth of the Arabian traveller. Formed for the passage of the desert by the structure of its hoof, and by the texture of its mouth, it is, as they express it, “the ship of the desert.” The dromedary, a lighter breed of the camel, is valued for its swiftness; the

ordinary camel for its strength and patience as a beast of burden. The ass of Arabia rivals the horse, both in beauty and in strength, and is preferred to the horse, both by the pilgrim and by the soldier, as hardier and more easily fed.

The inhabitants of Arabia have been estimated, from no very certain sources, at ten or twelve millions. The descendants of the ancient Arabs—"dwelling in tents," keeping up the habits of their ancestors, living on the produce of their flocks, or on the plunder of their fellow-men—are the modern Bedouins,—often celebrated as the wild and restless tribes, the hospitable children or the revengeful masters, of the desert.

The Arabs of the city differ from their brethren of the desert in their general manners, more than in their natural character; and they are inferior to them in energy, frankness, and generosity. They are largely engaged in merchandise. Before the route to India, by the Cape of Good Hope, was opened by the Portuguese navigators, they had in their hands the entire trade of India. The pilgrim was generally a merchant; and the large troops of such merchants composed the caravans that crossed the deserts.

The wandering tribes have never abandoned the patriarchal government of the earliest times. In the more settled parts of the country, there is a nearer approach to the kingly form of government, held in check by the strong love of personal freedom which distinguishes the whole nation.

The part of Arabia which is called Hedjaz, or Land of Pilgrimage, lies along the eastern side of the Red Sea, and reaches from Syria to Yemen. Near the sea, the plains are sandy, but the higher lands are fruitful, and the air is salubrious. This province contains the principal port on the Red Sea, Djidda, a well-built town, inhabited by twelve or fifteen thousand strangers, from all parts of Arabia and of the eastern world. In the same province are Mecca, the birth-place of Mohammed, and Medina, the city of his tomb.

MECCA lies in a rocky valley, a mile in breadth, and two miles in length, surrounded by naked mountains, about forty miles from the Red Sea. The neighbouring soil is barren. Their corn, fruits, and even their water, have to be brought from great distances. The importance of Mecca was owing to the *Kaaba* or temple, to which pilgrims resorted from all

parts of Arabia and the east once a year; and, likewise, to its being the great mart for merchandise. After the successes of Mohammed, the concourse of pilgrims and merchants was swelled by the disciples of his religion from nearly all regions of Asia, from Africa, and from the eastern parts of Europe. For these purposes the situation of this city is highly favourable, being at nearly the same distance from Syria, in the north, and Yemen, in the south, of easy access from the Red Sea by Djidda, and affording a convenient meeting-place for the camels in their long journey from the ports of Aden and Omar, to the fairs of Syria. "The lucrative exchange diffused plenty and riches in the streets of Mecca, and the noblest of her sons united the love of arms with the profession of merchandise."

Mohammed alludes to these advantages in the 106th sura (chapter) of the Korân, "For the uniting of the tribe of Koreish, their uniting in sending for the caravan of merchants and purveyors in winter and in summer, let them serve the Lord of this house, who supplieth with food against hunger, and hath rendered them secure from fear."

The Kaaba, or temple, is of great antiquity.

It is spoken of in the Korân as having been founded in the time of Abraham. There is historical evidence of its existence seven hundred years before the time of Mohammed. The custody of this temple was, for several generations, in the hands of the Koreish, and of the Hashemites—the family in that tribe from which Mohammed descended. Each tribe brought to the temple its own idol, and its own ceremonies. The city is more elegant than any other of the east, having broad streets, the houses of dark grey stone, with large and gaily ornamented windows; but it is destitute of buildings distinguished by such architectural taste or grandeur as the Mohammedans have erected in Syria, in Barbary, and in Spain. The population is about thirty thousand.

MEDINA, anciently called Yatreb, is a small town, two hundred and seventy miles north-east from Mecca, on the verge of the Great Arabian Desert. On the south side of this town is the tomb of Mohammed. There also are the tombs of Ibrahim, his son, and of Fatima, his daughter, of Omar, and Abu-Beker, and Othman, his successors. It contains, moreover, the window from which it is pretended Gabriel delivered the celestial mes-

sage to Mohammed, besides other curious and sacred reliques of his history. The city is described as a miniature of Mecca. The mosque of the prophet is built over his tomb.—Amid the rise and prevalence of the great empires which have successively flourished in the east, the Arabs have always maintained their independence. Neither the Egyptians, the Medes, nor the Persians, ever gained any footing among them. We learn from Herodotus, that Cambyses asked leave to pass through their territories in his expedition against Egypt; and Strabo informs us that Alexander died before he could execute a design which he had formed against them. Though Pompey subdued a Syrian tribe subject to the Arabs, and Trajan extended his empire to the borders of Arabia Petræa, the Romans cannot be said to have conquered Arabia. Even Gibbon, while he labours hard against the argument founded on the fact, acknowledges that “the body of the nation has escaped the yoke of the most powerful monarchies.”

The intercourse of the Persians with the Arabians had, long before the time of Mohammed, introduced among some of their tribes the religion of the Magi. About seven hundred

years before Mohammed, Abu Carb Asad, king of Yemen, is said to have introduced Judaism among the idolatrous Hamyarites of Arabia. One of his successors is alluded to with bitter execrations in the Korân (85.) His name was Yusef Dhu Nowâs. He put to death all that refused to embrace Judaism, by dreadful tortures, throwing them into a pit of fire: for this reason he was called the Lord of the Pit. On the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, many of the Jews fled to Arabia, proselyted several of the tribes, and possessed many of the towns and fortresses.

In the beginning of the third century, the persecutions and disorders of the eastern churches drove many of the Christians, especially of the Jacobites, into Arabia. The Arabs flying from the persecution of Dhu Nowâs to Hira conformed to the Christian faith. It is said by some of the Arabic Christian writers collected by Pocock, that Al Nooman, king of Hira, was induced by the following circumstances to profess himself a Christian. In a fit of intoxication, he ordered two of his companions, who had fallen asleep through excessive drinking, to be burned alive. On becoming sober, he raised a monument to his two friends,

and set apart two days, one a fortunate day, and the other unfortunate. Whosoever met him on the fortunate day was to be dismissed with presents; but whosoever met him on the unfortunate day was to be slain, and his blood was to be sprinkled on the monument. On an "unfortunate day" he was met by an Arab, who had once entertained him, when he was tired in hunting, and far from his attendants. The king granted the unhappy man a year's respite, provided he gave security for his returning at the end of the year to suffer death. One of the king's court offered himself as security, and the man was sent home laden with gifts.

When the last day of the year came, the king—not sorry to save the life of his former friend—gave orders that his surety should die. The persons near the throne urged that he should wait until the evening; but, as they were speaking, the Arab made his appearance. The king was naturally surprised; and, struck with admiration at the man's faithfulness to his surety, asked him what was his motive. "I have been taught by my religion to act thus," said the man. "What is that religion?" asked the king. "The Christian," replied the man.

The king desired him to explain to him the doctrines of this religion. He was then baptized; and his subjects followed his example. He pardoned both the man and his surety; and he abolished the cruel custom.

The tribe of the Koreish are represented by the Arabic writers as a kind of freethinkers. They were chiefly employed as merchants.

The qualities in which the Arabs were ambitious of excelling were eloquence, skill in arms and horsemanship, and generosity. Their *eloquence* was cultivated both in prose and verse. Their most elegant compositions differ from the flowing diction of the Greeks or of the modern languages of Europe, being remarkable chiefly for the proverb-like sententiousness of their expressions. Poetry was cultivated by them as an accomplishment in the noblest families; and a great poet was honoured as the historian, the model of language, the instructor in the economy of life, the best defender, and the highest ornament, of his tribe. Once a year, the poets met for a month, which was spent for the most part in contests for distinction in poetic composition; and the best poems were laid up in the royal treasuries. Seven celebrated poems, the Modhahalet (golden) were written in gold on

silken paper from Egypt, and hung up, by public order, in the temple at Mecca. These poems, with a translation of them into English, are given in the tenth volume of sir Wm. Jones' Works, published by the late lord Teignmouth.

Skill in arms was perfected among the Arabs by the petty wars incessantly carried on by independent tribes. It was a saying among them, that "instead of diadems, God had given them turbans, tents instead of walls and houses, and poems instead of written laws."

Writers on Arabian affairs have collected from native authors many remarkable examples of their generosity. In the court of the great temple of Mecca, three men disputed one day which of the Arabs was most eminent for this virtue. One of them contended for Abdallah, cousin of Mohammed; the second for Kais Ebn Said; and the third for Arâbah of the tribe of Aws. To settle the dispute, a person present suggested that each of the three should go to his favourite and ask his help. The first went to Abdallah, who was just mounting his camel to set off on a journey. "Son of the uncle of the prophet of God!" said the suppliant, "I am travelling, and am in

distress." Abdallah alighted, gave him the camel, and all that was upon her, and told him not to part with a sword which was fastened to the saddle, and which had belonged to Ali son of Abu-Taleb. He took the camel, and found on her some precious silken vests, and four thousand pieces of gold; but the sword was more precious than all the rest.

The second went to Kais. The servant told him that his master was asleep; but he asked him what he wanted. "I am in want," he said, "and I come to Kais for help." The servant said, that he would rather relieve his wants than disturb his master. He gave him a purse containing seven thousand pieces of gold, "which," he said, "was all the money in the house." He told him, also, to take a camel and a slave home with him. When Kais awoke, the servant told him what he had done. He gave him his freedom; and asked him why he had not called him; "for," he said, "I would have given him more."

The third went to Arâbah, who was on his way to prayers, leaning on two slaves, because he was growing blind. The friend told him his tale of distress. Arâbah let go the slaves, clapped his hands for grief that he had no

money, but told him to take the two slaves. His friend, at first, refused the offer; but Arâbah declared that if he would not take them, he would give them their liberty; and he groped his way along the wall.

When the three men returned from their experiment, Arâbah was pronounced the most generous of the three.

The Arabs are praised, by the ancient writers, for their truthfulness and their courtesy, and, by the moderns, for their sprightliness and their wit. Their own writers have not hesitated to acknowledge their disposition to cruelty, licentiousness, and plunder. However honest in their dealings amongst themselves and with their friends, they pretend that, as their father Ishmael was turned out of doors by Abraham, God had given them the deserts for their inheritance; and they have, therefore, a right to take what they like from the children of Isaac, or from any travellers that fall in their way.

Before the time of Mohammed, the Arabs were most exact in preserving the genealogies of their families. The only progress they had made in astronomy was to predict changes in the weather, from the rising or setting of the fixed stars.

The political condition of Arabia, at the time of Mohammed, was in the highest degree favourable to the plans of his ambition. As a populous and free country, it offered an asylum to the fugitives from persecution in the eastern Roman empire. As independent tribes, his fellow-countrymen were not likely to unite against him; but, having once embraced his religion, that became a bond of union to a hardy, warlike, and enthusiastic nation.

The great Persian empire had long been enfeebled by domestic factions, and was rapidly sinking to ruin. The western division of the Roman empire was overrun by the Goths. In the eastern division, the emperor Maurice was compelled to pay tribute to the Khagân or prince of the Huns; and Heraclius, after driving the Persians from his dominions, was employed more to his taste in determining religious controversies, than in making a feeble resistance to the new power that had sprung up, in Arabia, to wrest from his trembling hand the remains of an empire weakened in its vitals by effeminate luxury on the one hand, and by superstition and persecutions on the other.

All impartial historians agree in representing

the state of the Christian churches at the beginning of the seventh century as most deplorable. It was an age of intellectual darkness, relieved only, if at all, by bitter controversies on the most frivolous questions. Nor was the moral condition of the churches any better. Superstition, bigotry, and vice, had corrupted the worship and the sanctity of early ages ; and, instead of the love and forbearance taught by the gospel, most of the churches, especially those of the east, were torn to pieces by the fiercest mutual hatred.

Such was the country—such the people—such the age, in which Mohammed rose to effect that singular revolution with which his name is identified, and which enters so deeply into the history of the civilized world.

We now proceed to narrate the most striking particulars of his life.

CHAPTER II.

LIFE OF MOHAMMED.

MOHAMMED was descended, through a line of ancestors whose names are carefully preserved in the Arabian genealogies, from the founder of the Koreish, the noblest of their tribes ; and he belonged to the family of Hashem. Hashem's son, Abdol Motaleb, lived to the age of one hundred and ten years. One of his younger sons, Abdollah, married Amina, the beautiful daughter of Waheb. These were the parents of Mohammed, who was born at Mecca, in the year of our Lord, 571. His father died, either before his birth, or during his infancy ; and his mother died when he was eight years old. As he inherited no larger fortune than five camels and a female slave of Ethiopia, he was left, in his childhood, to the care of his grandfather, who, at his death, intrusted the orphan to his son Abu-Taleb, on whom the honours and the

wealth of the family then devolved. The uncle trained the youth, at a proper age, to the business of a merchant traveller. He continued in the employ of his uncle till he was twenty-five years old ; and this is all that is known of his early history.

It may show the extravagant fancy of the Arabs, to repeat a few of the marvellous stories currently received among them. His birth, they say, was accompanied by a stream of light that spread over all the castles, towns, and villages of Syria ; and the babe, as soon as it came into the world, fell on his knees, raised his hands towards heaven, and said, in a loud, clear tone, " God is great : there is only one God : and I am his prophet." The demons, supposed to have placed themselves in the constellations of the sky, to watch and to tempt the inhabitants of the earth, were driven from their abodes, and lost their power over oracles and idols. In the same hour, the sacred fire of the Persians, after burning for a thousand years, went out.—Some equally wild fictions were invented respecting his infancy and youth—all tending, as was believed, to mark the sacredness and dignity of the future prophet.

In his twenty-fifth year he entered the

service of Chadijah, a lady of the same tribe, and widow of one of the chief citizens of Mecca; and in her service, he travelled with her camels and her merchandise to the great fair of Damascus. To this lady he so commended himself by his engaging qualities, that, in three years, she became his wife.

By this marriage, Mohammed was raised to a situation becoming his birth and his connexions; and nothing could be more natural than that he should call to mind that his immediate ancestors had been the chiefs of their tribe. There is no reason for supposing that he discontinued his travels after his marriage. He was thus brought into contact with men of all religions, and of various nations; and he obtained that knowledge of opinions, and of the state of the surrounding governments, with their religious and political institutions, of which he made use in the solitary meditations of later years.

It was in the cave of Hira, not far from Mecca, that he matured his plan. The day being spent in prayer and fasting, he came home at night to tell his wife the sights he pretended to have seen, and the sounds he pretended to have heard, in this mysterious

cave. He told her, that the angel Gabriel had appeared to him, and had addressed him as the apostle of God. Chadijah was charmed with this intelligence. If she had any doubts, they were removed by her cousin Waraka, who had learned the Christian religion, or, at least, had some acquaintance with the Old and New Testaments. He declared his conviction that Mohammed was the prophet foretold by Moses Ebn Amram. Encouraged by this declaration, Mohammed went to the Kaaba; walked round the temple seven times; and then returned to his house.—His first convert was his wife. The next was Zeid, his servant. The third was Ali, son of his uncle and guardian Abu-Taleb, and, at that time, a boy. The fourth was Abu-Beker, a man of the highest character, and of the greatest influence in Mecca. By Abu-Beker's persuasion, Othman, Abdal-Rahman, Saad, Al-Zobeir, and several leading men of Mecca, were induced to join him. These disciples of his religion became the main supporters of his authority, and the bravest of his warriors. For Abu-Beker's help on this occasion Mohammed styled him Abd' Allah (servant of God), Al-tzeddik (the righteous), and Atik, the preserved (from hell-fire).

For three years, Mohammed continued to teach his doctrines in private only, because he was afraid of the opposition of the Koreish. During this time, he professed to have received many revelations from heaven. At length, he felt so strong in the support of Abu-Beker, and in the number of his followers, that he resolved to declare to his relations that God had commanded him to make known his mission to them. With this view he directed his cousin Ali to make ready an entertainment, to which all the descendants of Abdol Motalleb were invited. About forty of them accepted the invitation. The invitation being repeated, and again accepted, Mohammed addressed them in the following words :—"I know no man in Al Jereerah al Arab, who can make to his relations a better proposal than what I now make to you. I offer you the happiness both of this world, and of that which is to come. God Almighty hath commanded me to call you unto him ; who therefore among you will be my *vizir* (or minister) and my brother ?"

They all hesitated, or declined ; then Ali rose up, and said—"O prophet of God ! I will be thy *vizir*, I will beat out the teeth, pull out the eyes, rip open the bellies, and cut off the

legs of all who shall dare to oppose thee!" Mohammed embraced Ali with great tenderness, and said to those who were present—"This is my brother, my deputy, and my khalif; therefore submit to him, and obey him." The company only laughed at him, saying to Abu-Taleb, "Thou must now obey thine own son."

Mohammed now began to preach to the people in public. His piercing wit and lively imagination, combined with great strength of memory, had been improved by travel, and by solitary thought; and the beauty of his person, and the fascination of his address, were so great that he was likely to gain the favour of the people. But he so severely condemned their idolatry and their perverseness, that, with but few exceptions, they declared themselves his enemies. Though Abu-Taleb was not himself a convert, he protected his nephew from the enmity of the people. The principal men of his tribe threatened a grievous quarrel with him if he did not persuade his nephew to give up his preaching.

The uncle urged him to desist; but Mohammed replied—"If they set the sun against me on my right hand, and the moon on my left,

I will not give up." His uncle promised to support him, though the people of his tribe determined that he and all his followers should be driven from the city. They cruelly persecuted them. But his uncle Hamya, and also Omar, a man of high character, who had strongly opposed him, were added, about this time, to the number of his adherents. Still the persecution continued so hot that some of his most distinguished followers were forced to flee, in separate companies, to the najâshi (king) of Ethiopia, on the opposite side of the Red Sea; by this prince they were so favourably received, that he refused to give them up to the demands of the Koreish, and even offered an asylum to all their brethren that might choose to come.

Alarmed at the spread of the new doctrine, the Koreish entered into a solemn league against the Hashemites and the family of Abdol Mottaleb, which they committed to writing, and laid up in the Kaaba. This league divided the tribe into two factions, of which one was headed by Abu-Taleb, and the other by Abd' al Ungjah. When this separation had lasted five years—in which Mohammed was continually harassed by his enemies—he told his uncle that God had shown his displeasure

against the Koreish for their league against him, by sending a worm to eat out every word of the writing but the name of God. Whatever opinion may be formed of the truth of this story, or of the private notice, which, as Mr. Sale suggests, "Mohammed might have received," we are told by the Moslem writers that Abu-Taleb immediately repeated what he had heard to the Koreish, and offered to abandon his nephew to them if it should be found false, on condition that they would annul the league if it should be found true. They agreed to these terms. They found the writing as he had described ; and the decree was pronounced to be void.

In the same year, Abu-Taleb died at the age of eighty, without any evidence that can be relied upon, of having embraced his nephew's doctrines. Soon after, Mohammed lost his wife, Chadijah, in the sixty-fifth year of her age. The Mohammedans have marked this as "The Year of Mourning."

After the death of his uncle, and of his wife, Mohammed was exposed to the fury of the Koreish, from which he had previously found a shelter in the castles of Abu-Taleb. From this storm of persecution, he first betook him-

self to Tajif, accompanied by Zeid, his former servant. Two chief men of the tribe, to whom he applied for protection, received him coldly, if not with contempt. He stayed in their town for a month, and gained but few converts. He returned to Mecca, under the protection of Al-Motaam. Amidst many insults and dangers he preached to the pilgrims from all parts of Arabia, against their idols. Among the proselytes whom he gained by these bold efforts were six men of the tribe of Khazrai from Yathrab (Medina) a city chiefly occupied, at that time, by this tribe, and another, that of Al-Aws. On their return home, these converts spread the new religion among their fellow-citizens. These men are spoken of by the Moslem writers as the Al-Ansâr (supporters.) Ten men of the tribe of Khazrai, and two of the tribe of Aws, met Mohammed on the hill of Al-Akaba, to the north of Mecca. There they pledged their fidelity to him. He sent back with them Musab, one of his disciples, to teach them his religion more fully. The teacher was so successful that a chief man of the city, the prince of the tribe of Aws, and some portion of nearly every family in the city, were soon added to the followers of the Korân.

It was in this year, the twelfth of his mission,

that Mohammed professed to have made his celebrated night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to the seven heavens.

“As I was within the inclosure of the Kaaba, (or, as he sometimes told the story, as I lay upon a stone,) behold one (Gabriel) came to me with another, and cut me open from the pit of the throat to the groin ; this done, he took out my heart, and presently, there was brought near me a golden basin full of the water of faith ; and he washed my heart, stuffed it, and replaced it. Then was brought to me a white beast less than a mule, but larger than an ass. I mounted him, and Gabriel went with me till I came to the first heaven of the world, and when he knocked at the door, it was said to him, ‘ Who is there ? ’ he answered, ‘ Gabriel ; ’ and, ‘ Who is with you ? ’ he answered, ‘ Mohammed ; ’ then it was asked, ‘ Has the apostle had his mission ? ’ he replied, ‘ Yes ; ’ whereupon the wish was uttered, ‘ May it be fortunate with him ! he will now be very welcome ; ’ and the door was opened, and, behold, there was Adam ! Upon this Gabriel said to me, ‘ This is your father Adam, greet him ; ’ and I did so, and he returned the greeting, saying, ‘ May my best son and the best prophet be

prosperous !' Then he went up with me to the second heaven, and, as he knocked at the door, a voice demanded, 'Who is there ?' when he had answered, 'Gabriel,' he was further asked, 'And who is with you ?' to which he replied, 'Mohammed ;' the voice again inquired, 'Has the apostle had his mission ?' Upon his answering 'Yes,' I again heard the words, 'May it be fortunate to him ! he will now be very welcome ;' and the door was opened, and behold there was Jahia (that is, John) and Isa (Jesus,) and they were cousins-german.*

"Gabriel said to me, 'These are Jahia and Isa, greet them ;' and I did so, and they greeting me in turn, said, 'May our best brother and the best prophet be successful !'"

It would be nauseous to an English reader to repeat in the same manner, as my author does, the knocking at the doors, the same question and answer, and the exchange of greeting, through the following five heavens ; it is sufficient to say that Mohammed being with Gabriel admitted into the third heaven, found Joseph there, Enoch in the fourth heaven, Aaron in the fifth, Moses in the sixth, and Abraham in the

* Here Mohammed was mistaken ; the virgin Mary and Elizabeth were not sisters.

seventh ; and that when he was near Moses, Moses wept, and being asked the reason of his weeping, said, "It was because a young man, whose mission was posterior to his, would have a greater number of his nation enter into paradise, than he should of his countrymen." "Then," continued the prophet, "I was carried up to the tree Ledra,* beyond which it is not lawful to go. The fruit thereof is as large as the water-pots of Hadjr, and the leaves as big as the ears of an elephant. I saw there also four rivers, and when I asked Gabriel, 'What rivers are these?' he answered, 'Two of them run within paradise, and quite through it ; the other two, which run on the outside of it, are the Nile and the Euphrates.' Then he took me to the house of visitation,† into which seventy thousand angels go every day. Here there were set before me three vessels, one of wine, another of milk, and the third of honey. I drank of the milk, whereupon Gabriel said to me, 'This is the happiest (omen) for thee and thy nation.' Another tradition adds, 'If you had chosen the wine, your nation would have

* Or Lotus tree.

† This house is the original, whereof a copy was sent down to Adam.

strayed from the right way.' Lastly, when I came to the throne of God, I was ordered to pray fifty times a day. In my return from thence, being near Moses, he asked me what I had been commanded to do ; I told him to pray fifty times a day. ' And are you able,' said he, ' to pray fifty times a day?' and with an oath he declared, ' I have made the experiment among men, for I have endeavoured to bring the children of Israel to it, but never could compass it. Go back then to your Lord, and beg an abatement for your nation.' So I went back, and he took off ten prayers ; and coming to Moses, he advised me as before, and I went back again, and had ten more abated ; then coming to Moses, he repeated the same advice. I therefore returned, and was commanded to pray ten times a day ; upon Moses repeating what he had said before, I went back again, and was commanded to say prayers five times a day ; and when Moses was informed of this last order, he would have had me ' go back again to my Lord and beg a still further abatement ;' I replied, ' I have so often petitioned my Lord that I am ashamed ;' and so saying, I took my leave of him, and prayed for him."

It is to us of little moment whether the

Mohammedans receive this story as describing a real journey, as a dream, or as a vision, nor need we care to know what particular view their pretended prophet had, in telling so manifest a lie; the belief in it raised his name to the highest degree of reputation, and secured the easy acquiescence of his followers in any doctrine he might teach, or any order he might give. The foolish tale is told, with tedious particularity, and with a curious mixture of sublimity and absurdity. It is not related in the Korân, though plainly referred to, with the artfulness of a grand deceiver, in the following passages :—

“Praise be to him who transported his servant by night from the sacred temple of Mecca to the very remote temple of Jerusalem, the circuit of which we have blessed, that we might show him some of our signs, for God is he who heareth and seeth.”

“Nothing hindered us from sending thee with miracles, except that the former nations have charged them with imposture.”

“We have appointed the vision which we showed thee, and also the tree cursed in the Korân.”—(17.)

The Christian reader will not fail to see

how entirely opposite such pretensions are to the reality, majesty, and benevolence of the miracles of Jesus, and of his apostles. There is all the difference between a crafty deceiver, and the messenger of God.

When Mohammed related his night journey to his uncle Al-Abbas and to his cousin Omm Hana, the daughter of Abu-Taleb, they both thought it so incredible that they entreated him not to relate it to the people. But he persisted. Some of his followers left him. His enemies treated him with ridicule. But Abu-Beker avowed that he believed what Mohammed said. A passage in the fifty-third sura of the Korân, entitled, "The Star," was produced to assure the people of the prophet's veracity. "By the star, when it setteth, your companion Mohammed erreth not, nor is he led astray; neither doth he speak of his own will. It is no other than a revelation which has been revealed to him. One mighty in power, endued with understanding, taught it him, who appeared in the highest part of the horizon. Afterwards, he approached the pulpit, and drew near to him, until he was at the distance of two bows' length from him, or yet nearer; and he revealed unto his servant that which he revealed. The

heart of Mohammed did not falsely represent that which he saw. He, also, saw him another time by the lotus-tree which there is no passing: near it is the garden of the eternal abode. When the lotus-tree covered that which is covered, his eyesight turned not aside, neither did it wander, and he really beheld some of the greatest signs of his Lord."—(53.)

The opposition at Mecca had now become so powerful and alarming that Mohammed was glad to receive offers of help from Masab, who returned from Yathrab (Medina) accompanied by seventy-three converts, besides others, who were still unbelievers. These men pledged their faith to him that they would protect him against all insults, as heartily as they would protect their own wives and children; while he swore, on his part, to be faithful to them, and never to abandon them. "All things," he said, "are now common between us: your blood is as my blood, your ruin as my ruin. We are bound to each other by honour and by interest: I am your friend, and the enemy of your enemies." "But," said his disciples, "if we are killed in your service, what will be our reward?" "Paradise," replied Mohammed. The treaty was ratified by the people of the city.

These preparations being made, he directed his companions to depart from Mecca to Medina, while he himself and Abu-Beker, and Ali, remained behind, awaiting permission from Heaven to follow.

The alliance thus formed with the people of Medina so alarmed the enemies of Mohammed in Mecca, that they resolved to prevent his escape. In a council, held for that purpose, they resolved that one man of each tribe should be chosen to put him to death: by sharing the honour or the guilt among all the tribes, they hoped to deter the single family of Hashem from seeking to avenge their kinsman's blood.

Notice of this conspiracy reached Mohammed. Directing Ali to cover himself with his green cloak and to lie down in his place, he escaped to the house of Abu-Beker, while the conspirators watched the chamber till morning, when they discovered the trick which had been played on them. Mohammed proceeded with Abu-Beker from Abu-Beker's house to a cave at Mount Thûr, south-east of Mecca, where they hid themselves for three days from their pursuers. "There are only *two* of us," said Abu-Beker. "There is a third," replied Mohammed: "even God himself: he will

defend us." By a circuitous path through the mountains, the impostor and his companion arrived safely at Medina. He was met at a short distance from the town by five hundred of the inhabitants. Mounted on a camel, shaded by a canopy of palm-leaves, with a turban unfurled before him as a standard, and attended by the bravest of his followers, he made his public entry with every demonstration of general joy.

This *flight* (in the Arabic language *Hegira*) is the epoch in the Arabian chronology from which all other events are dated. The first year of the *Hegira* is the year of our Lord 602.

Mohammed's first act at Medina (*the city* is the meaning of this word) was the building of a mosque, or temple, for religious worship. He then married Ayesha, daughter of Abu-Beker, to whom he had been espoused a year before. He also gave Fatima, his daughter, in marriage to Ali. To unite the refugees with the citizens of Medina, he established a brotherhood between them, joining one of the refugees to one of the citizens, under a solemn engagement to love and cherish each other to the utmost of their power. He likewise changed the *Kebla*, the point to which his followers were

to turn their faces in prayer. At first this was declared to be indifferent; then Jerusalem was fixed upon, to gratify the Jews; but now he ordered them to direct their prayers to Mecca. In the same year, he appointed the annual fast, in the month Ramadân.

It illustrates the genius of Mohammed, and of the people, to observe that, as soon as he was settled in his sovereignty at Medina, he began to arm his followers. At first, this seems to have been done to gratify the Arab love of plunder, and to wreak his vengeance on his enemies. The earliest attempts of this kind were feeble, and unsuccessful.—The first great action which may be regarded as laying the foundation of all his greatness, was the battle of BEDER.

Abu Sofian, the head of the Koreish at Mecca, was conducting a caravan of a thousand camels with rich merchandise from Syria, having a guard of some thirty or forty men. The spies of Mohammed informed him of this tempting prize. He sent a party to lie in wait. Abu-Sofian had notice of this movement, and sent a messenger to Mecca for additional force. Nine hundred and fifty men, the principal people of Mecca, instantly marched to his aid. Moham-

med, leaving Omar to defend Medina, advanced against the caravan with three hundred and thirteen men. He encamped at Safra, a port on the Red Sea, where he heard of the march of the troops from Mecca. He advanced to the neighbourhood of Beder, and pitched his tents near a well of water, not far from the encampment of the enemy. Early in the morning, the men from Mecca were seen on the neighbouring heights. Before the battle, three of the Koreish encountered three of the Moslems in single combat, and were slain. Mohammed, having prayed with great vehemence, threw a handful of sand towards the enemy, exclaiming—"May their faces be confounded!" and pretended that God had promised him certain victory. He then cheered on his men, who, shouting the war cry—Allah Ackbar"—God is great—rushed on the enemy with such courage that they put them to flight, took seventy of the principal men prisoners, and left about the same number dead upon the spot.

Abu-Sofian, in the mean time, led the greatest part of the caravan safely to Mecca.

On his return to Safra, Mohammed found that he had lost at Beder six mohajerias (refugees) and eight ansars (helpers of Medina.)

These were looked upon as martyrs ! Two of the prisoners—personal enemies of Mohammed—had their heads struck off by Ali, at his leader's command ; and the rest were ransomed for four thousand drachms of silver. His return to Medina was in the manner of a triumph.

After their defeat at Beder, the Koreish sent ambassadors with furs, and other rich presents, to interest the prince of Ethiopia on their behalf ; but he returned their presents, and ordered them to leave his dominions.

Abu-Sofian, for the defence of whose caravan the defeat at Beder had been incurred, resolved, in his next journey to Syria, to take a circuitous route, eastward of the province of Irâk. The merchants who accompanied him had a large sum of money. Mohammed despatched Zeid, with five hundred horse, to intercept them. He made himself master of the spoils, and returned with them to Medina. Mohammed took one-fifth, and distributed the rest among the plunderers.

In the following year, the Koreish sent an army of three thousand, including two hundred horse, and seven hundred men armed with coats of mail, headed by Abu-Sofian, who was accompanied by his wife Henda. They en-

camped at Dhû' Choleifa, a village about six miles from Medina. Mohammed occupied a village at the foot of Ohud, a mountain four miles north of Medina, placing fifty archers, the bravest of his men, in the rear, with orders not to quit their post. The right wing of the enemy was led by Khaled, the left by Akrema, the centre by Abu-Sofian, and a body of reserve was headed by Henda, with fifteen other matrons, who excited the troops, by beating the tambour, bewailing the death of their countrymen who fell at Beder, and calling out from time to time—"Courage! brave sons of Abd'l Dûr, courage!" The first shock was given by Mohammed, whose forces rushed on the centre of the Koreish, and made them give way: their chief standard-bearer was slain, and they fled in great confusion. But the archers, eager for plunder, leaving their post, Khaled came upon their rear with his cavalry, and crying out, "Mohammed is slain," forced the Moslems to retreat. Mohammed attempted to rally them in vain. He nearly lost his life. Hamza, his uncle, and Mosseab, his standard-bearer, were killed, and Abu-Beker, Omar, and Othman were wounded. These wounded warriors retreated so skilfully, that Abu-Sofian

gained nothing by his victory, but a promise from Mohammed to meet him the following year at Beder. Mohammed's followers were enraged at their defeat. Some upbraided their leader as a false prophet. Others were infuriated by the loss of their friends. To pacify them, he ascribed their loss to the sins of some of those who had been engaged in the battle ; and he assured them that those who fell could not have avoided their fate, which was foredoomed of God,—that they died as martyrs for the true faith, and were translated to the abodes of the blessed. The following passage in the Korân is said to have been given on this occasion :—"They who have left their country, and have been turned out of their houses, and have suffered for my sake, and have been slain in battle, verily I will expiate their evil deeds from them, and I will surely bring them into gardens watered by rivers, a reward from God, and with God the most excellent reward. . . . Let not the prosperous dealing of the unbelievers in the land deceive thee ; it is but a slender provision ; and then their reception shall be in hell ; an unhappy couch shall it be. But they who fear their Lord, shall have gardens through which rivers flow, they shall continue therein

for ever : this is the gift of God ; for that which is with God, shall be better for the righteous man, than short-lived worldly prosperity. . . . O true believers ! be patient, and strive to excel in patience, and be constant-minded, and fear God, that ye may be happy."

The fourth year of the Hegira is marked in the Mohammedan annals, by the suppression of a band of robbers of the tribe of the Asadites, who threatened incursions in the territory of Medina. Mohammed prevented them by sending fifty men of his own party into their country. These were so successful in their plunder, that, besides large flocks of sheep, each man had seven camels for his own share. Sophian Khâled was killed by Dhu'l Mahdrat, to whom Mohammed gave a commission for that purpose ; and he rewarded him by giving him, as a token of his esteem, the cane he carried in his hand. This cane was thought so highly of by Dhu'l Mahdrat that he never parted with it ; and he had it buried with him in his grave.—Such was the superstition of the Arabs. So easy was it for Mohammed to attach men to his person : one murderer rewarding another for his crime by a walking-stick ! Another attempt at assassination failed. Amzu and another man were sent from

Medina by Mohammed to destroy Abu-Sofian, at Mecca; but the design being discovered, they were forced to flee.

The towns of Edhl and Al Phaon sent deputies to Mohammed at Medina, requesting him to send them teachers, that they might be instructed in his religion. On the arrival of six teachers at a fountain named Al-Raji, the deputies attacked them, killed three and took the rest prisoners, of whom one was afterwards stoned to death for attempting to escape. The other two they sold as slaves to the Koreish, who, on their arrival at Mecca, put them both to death. A similar fate befel seventy other teachers who were sent to the province of Nedjed, a mountainous district, the abode of many wandering tribes. Sixty-nine were put to the sword by the prince to whom they were recommended, and only one escaped.

It was in the same year that Mohammed had his pretended revelation—directing him to forbid to his followers games of chance, and the use of wine. The real occasion of the prohibition of wine is related in the following manner. The prophet entered the house of a friend, at noon, when the inmates and guests were celebrating a marriage with their usual festivities; but, on visiting the same house next day, he

saw blood on the ground, and dismembered limbs scattered about, which, he was told, were the effects of wine on the guests, who had become furious, and produced this scene of destruction. Many of Mohammed's contemporaries were deterred by the prohibition he now issued, from adhering to him; while others, who abstained from wine, as injurious to their health and to their morals, were, for the same reason, induced to join him.

When Mohammed fled from Mecca to Medina, the Jews of Al-Nadir dwelling in Medina, had entered into a treaty with him to remain neuter between him and his enemies. On hearing of his success at Beder, they acknowledged that he was the prophet foretold in their law; but when they heard of his failure at Ohud, one of their number, Caab Ebn Al-Astraf, with forty horsemen, engaged with an oath to adhere to Abu-Sofian his great enemy. Mohammed procured the death of Caab, and besieged his tribe in their fortress, three miles from Medina. After six days, they surrendered, and were scattered in Syria and through remote parts of Arabia.

In the same year, Mohammed subdued a body of the tribe of Ghatfân in the province of Nedjed.

The engagement to meet Abu-Sofian at Beder was not forgotten. Mohammed marched to the place, and remained there eight days. Abu-Sofian set out to meet him ; but, on reaching either Ashu Al-Tarik, or Makhaba, his courage failed him, and he went home. Mohammed ascribed his cowardice to his being struck with a terror from God.

On the borders of Syria, there was a town called Dawmat Al-Jandal belonging to some wild Arabs, who infested the neighbouring district, and pillaged all the travellers that came in their way. Against these robbers Mohammed went, at the head of a thousand men. At his approach, they abandoned the town, and the conqueror returned laden with spoil.

It was in this year that a strong confederacy was formed against Mohammed by the enemies he had injured. The Koreish of Mecca, the tribe of Ghatfân in Nedjed, and the Jews of Nadir and Koreidha, besieged Medina with an army of twelve thousand men. Before their arrival, Mohammed had made a deep ditch round the city, and assembled three thousand men for its defence. The Ghatfânites placed themselves in the higher part of the valley, on the east, and the Koreish in the lower part, on the west, cast-

ing arrows and slinging stones against the defenders of the city. Their tents were overturned by a storm. Many miracles are reported by the Mohammedan writers. It seems to be well proved that Mohammed was not without the means of fomenting divisions among the besiegers. Amru, one of their principal horsemen, rode up to the trenches, and challenged the best man among the Moslems. Ali accepted the challenge of his uncle, who thus addressed him : "Nephew, what a pleasure I am going to have in killing you." "No," rejoined Ali, "it is I that am going to have greater pleasure, uncle, in killing you!" They both dismounted. The dust they raised in fighting, prevented their being seen : only the clash of their swords was heard. When the dust had fallen, Ali had his knee on his uncle's breast, and he was seen cutting his throat. He then dispatched another enemy; and drove a third back to his companions. Wearied, dispirited, and divided among themselves, the Koreish first, and then the Ghaftânites, broke up, abandoned the siege, and marched towards Mecca. When Mohammed heard of their retiring, he said, "I have obtained success by means of the east wind."

This was the WAR of the DITCH, or the War of the Nations, so celebrated by Mohammedan writers. The thirty-third chapter of the Korân, entitled "The Confederates," relates to it: "O true believers! remember the favour of God toward you, when armies of infidels came against you, and we sent against them a wind, and hosts of angels which ye saw not, and God beheld that which ye did. When they came against you from above, and when your sight became troubled, and your hearts came even to your throats for fear, and ye imagined of God various imaginations. . . . Ye have in the apostle of God an excellent example unto him who hopeth in God and the last day, and remembereth God frequently. . . . God hath driven back the infidels in their wrath: they obtained no advantage, and God was a sufficient protection unto the faithful in battle: for God is strong and mighty."

When the confederates had departed, Mohammed and his followers left the intrenchments, and retired to refresh themselves in the city. In obedience, as was pretended, to the command of an angel, he set off in pursuit of the tribe of Koreidha, to chastise them for their perfidy in joining his enemies. He besieged

their seemingly impregnable fortress. At the end of twenty-six days, they surrendered ; the men, including Caab, already mentioned, were massacred ; the women and children were led away as captives ; their houses and lands were given to the refugees at Medina ; and their movable property, consisting of three hundred cuirasses, one thousand lances, fifteen hundred pikes, and various costly utensils, were distributed among the troops. The most beautiful of the captives, Rihâna, daughter of Amru, he prevailed on with difficulty to adopt his religion ; and he kept her for himself. The rest were sent into the province of Nedjed to be sold, or exchanged for horses and arms.

The second convert of Mohammed, it will be remembered, was Zeid, his servant, who, on his profession of the new faith, received his freedom from his master. He had been taken in childhood by a party of roving Arabs, and bought by Mohammed, or Chadijah. Some years after, his father hearing that he was at Mecca, repaired to that city, and offered a large sum for his ransom : but Zeid declaring that he would not leave his master, Mohammed led him by the hand to the black stone of the Kaaba, and publicly adopted him as his son and heir. In

this adoption, the father acquiesced, and, from that time, Zeid was known as the son of Mohammed. After the publication of the new religion, he gave him to wife Zeinab, or Zenobia, (Mohammed's cousin,) with whom he lived happily for some years.

In the year which now passes under our review, Mohammed conceived a passion for the wife of Zeid, and married her, celebrating his nuptials by a banquet of all the luxuries Arabia could produce, to which a great assembly of both sexes were invited. This marriage shocked the notions of many of his followers, in whose eyes the bride was no other than the wife of his son! To meet these objections, Mohammed wickedly inserted the following sentences in the thirty-third chapter of the Korân.

“It is not fit for a true believer of either sex, when God *and* his apostle have decreed a thing, that they should have the liberty of choosing a different matter of their own : and whoever is disobedient unto God and his apostle surely erreth with a manifest error. And remember when thou saidst to him unto whom God had been gracious, and on whom also thou hadst conferred favours, Keep thy wife to thyself, and fear God, and thou didst conceal that in thy

mind, which God had determined to discover, and didst fear men, whereas it was more just that thou shouldst fear God. But, when Zeid had determined the matter concerning her, and had resolved to divorce her, we joined her in marriage to thee, lest a crime should be charged on the true believers, in marrying the wives of their adopted sons, when they have determined the matter concerning them, and the command of God is to be performed." In the same chapter, it is given to Mohammed as a peculiar privilege to have as many wives as he pleases.—It is hard to say which is the worst part of this business—the licentiousness, the hypocrisy, the craft, or the blasphemy.

To present such a compound of iniquities, in connexion with the pretence of a religion from heaven, is to sicken the heart ; it suggests a close resemblance between Mohammedanism and all other false religions ; since all of them give indulgence to those lusts, which it belongs to the nature of true religion to restrain.

The following year presents a series of excursions against the Arabs of many tribes, which afford little scope for variety of description ; though they show the manner in which Mohammed lived, and the means by which he

prepared his followers for the victories of following years.—A rich caravan was plundered by Zeid, with seventy followers.—Permission was obtained from the emperor Heraclius at Constantinople to trade with his subjects. The agent who obtained this permission was plundered on his return to Medina by Al-Horeid in the valley of Hisma; but the robber was put to death, together with his son, and most of his men, by Zeid, at the head of five hundred Moslems. Eight of the Orasmites who came to Medina, and professed the religion of Mohammed, were restored to health, when they were sick, by his directions; but having murdered his shepherds, and stolen his camels, they were brought to Medina, where their eyes were put out with a red hot iron, their hands and feet cut off, and they died miserably on crosses.

One of the historians mentions the conversion of some Christian Arabs about this time. The prince of Dawmat Al-Jandal yielded to the arguments of Abdu'l Kahman; and his example was followed by most of his subjects. Those who persisted in abiding by their former religion were required to pay tribute. The successful preacher married the daughter of the prince, and their own son became a famous doctor of the

Mohammedan law at Medina, and was one of the successors to Mohammed's first companions.

The Mostalekites, a powerful tribe, headed by Al-Hâreth, having gathered in large numbers to attack the Moslems, Mohammed met them near a well in the plain of Al-Moreisi, five miles from the sea, and twenty from Hasfan. Al-Hâreth was slain by an arrow; and, in a general engagement, Mohammed gained a victory so complete that the credit of it rests on an old tradition, that "Gabriel appeared on his side, dressed in white, and mounted on such a horse as had never been seen." Joweira, the daughter of Al-Hâreth, fell to the lot of Thabet; but Mohammed, struck with her beauty, bought her from him, and added her to the number of his wives. The marriage led to an alliance with the tribe, which was greatly to the advantage of Mohammed.

In this expedition, Ayesha accompanied her husband. In a night march of the army, on their return to Medina, she had occasion to alight from her camel not far from Medina, and before remounting, she found that she had dropped her necklace of Duafâr onyx-stones, and she went back to seek it. Her attendants, supposing that she was in the small

covered pavilion in which she sat on her camel, had replaced it, and proceeded. On her return to the road, missing her camel, she walked on to the next station without meeting any person. Imagining, of course, that as soon as she was missed, they would return for her, she remained where she was and fell asleep. In the morning she was found by Safwân, one of Mohammed's officers. He awoke her by repeating with a low voice the words, "We are God's, and to him we must return." She covered herself with her veil, and Safwân, placing her on his camel, walked by her side, till she reached the army, much fatigued, at noon.

The circumstance excited suspicion among a jealous people; and there were those who accused Ayesha, and they nearly brought her to ruin. Whatever Mohammed himself might think of appearances, and of the story told by Ayesha, he was induced by policy, if not by affection, to clear her character by his usual device—a pretended revelation. "As for the party among you who have published the falsehood concerning Ayesha, think it not to be an evil unto you: on the contrary, it is better for you. Every man of them shall be punished according to the injustice of which he hath been

guilty ; and he among them who had undertaken to aggravate the same, shall suffer a grievous punishment."—(Korân, c. 24.)

It was six years since Mohammed had fled from Mecca, and he now approached the city, at the head of fourteen hundred men, with the avowed design of a pacific visit. When he reached Al-Hodeibirga, on the verge of the sacred territory, the Koreish sent him word that he would not be allowed to enter Mecca. He, therefore, resolved to force his entrance. When the Koreish made demonstrations of resistance, he sent Othman to propose an accommodation ; but he was put in prison. Eighty Meccans, sent to reconnoitre, were taken ; but when they were brought to Mohammed he set them at liberty. This led to a treaty of peace between the parties. The agents of the Koreish maintained a rigid pertinacity in the wording of the treaty: Mohammed directed Ali to begin with the form, "In the name of the most merciful God." The men from Mecca insisted that it should be—"In thy name, O God." He then styled himself "Mohammed the apostle of God;" to which they made the very natural objection—"If we had acknowledged thee to be the apostle of

God, we would have offered thee no opposition." The moderation of Mohammed in submitting to the language insisted on by the other party was displeasing to his own followers, and they were with difficulty persuaded to acquiesce. The substance of the treaty was—that there should be a truce for ten years; and that, in the next year, Mohammed should have leave to visit the temple at Mecca, for three days.

The veneration in which Mohammed was held by his followers, may be gathered from the account which was given by Arwa the Thakîfite, who was sent from Mecca to his camp at Hodeibirga. "I have been at the court of the king of Persia, and at the court of the Roman emperor; but I have never seen any prince treated with so much respect as Mohammed receives from his companions. When he washes before prayers, they run and catch the water he has used. When he spits, they lick it up. They gather every hair that falls from him with the lowliest superstition."

Encouraged by his success among his own people, Mohammed now entertained the hope of winning the neighbouring princes to his faith. He sealed his letters with the words, "MOHAMMED THE APOSTLE OF GOD."

The first letter was sent to Chosru, king of Persia. When that monarch found that Mohammed had placed his own name before that of Chosru, he tore the letter in pieces, and sent away the messenger in a rage. When Mohammed heard this, he said, "God shall in like manner tear his kingdom."

Doza Ebn Koleifa was sent with a similar epistle to the emperor Heraclius, who was then in Syria. He received the communication with every outward mark of respect, and dismissed the messenger with gifts. The Mohammedans affirm that the emperor would have embraced the Arabian faith, if he had not been afraid of losing his crown.

The prince of the Copts, who had been sent by Heraclius as governor of Egypt, had kept back the revenues of the province from the time when the Persians besieged Constantinople. To him Mohammed sent a letter in the same terms as that which had been sent to the emperor. Mokawkas—that was his name—placed the letter reverentially on his breast, and laid it up in the ivory casquet in which he kept his signet. He sent a favourable reply, together with a present for Mohammed, consisting of four precious gems and two Coptic

girls. One of these was Mariyam, the mother of Mohammed's son Ibrahim.

To the king of Ethiopia, who had formerly been so friendly to his followers in distress, he addressed a longer letter. When the king received it, he put it to his eyes, and then, coming down from his throne, sat on the bare ground. He professed his faith in the prophet of Arabia, placed the letter in a box of ivory, and sent to Mohammed a most humble and submissive answer.

Similar letters were sent to others of less note, and with various success.

The last two chapters of the Korân are explained by the Mohammedan commentators as referring to a curious instance of witchcraft, said to have been practised on their prophet. The chapters in the Korân are these: "Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of the day-break, that he may deliver me from the mischief of those things which he hath created, and from the mischief of night when it cometh on, and from the mischief of women blowing on knots, and from the mischief of the envious when he envieth." "Say, I fly unto the Lord of men, the God of men, that he may deliver me from the mischief of the whisperer who silyly with-

draweth, who whispereth evil suggestions into the hearts of men from genii, and from men." The comment on these passages is as follows: "Lobeid, a Jew, with the assistance of his daughters bewitched Mohammed by tying eleven knots on a cord which they hid in a well; whereupon, Mohammed falling ill, God revealed this chapter and the following, and Gabriël acquainted him with the use he was to make of them, and of the place where the cord was hidden; according to whose directions the prophet sent Ali to fetch the cord; and, the same being brought, he repeated the two chapters over it, and at every verse, for they consisted of eleven, a knot was loosed, till, on finishing the last word, he was entirely freed from the charm."

To punish the Jews, and, at the same time, to make up for the disappointment of his followers, in being obliged to retire from Mecca,—though he had foretold, the year before, that he should enter Mecca with his companions having their heads shaven and their beards cut off,—he conducted them to Chaibar, a fruitful spot in the desert, six days' journey to the north-east of Medina. This place belonged to the Jews; and it was defended by several strong castles.

One of the castles was soon taken. From another, Al-Kamus, situated on a high rock, in which were laid up the treasures of the tribe, he was repeatedly driven back, at the risk of his life. Abu-Beker was driven back in the like manner. Then Omar tried, but failed. At length, Ali having slain Marhab, the champion of Chaibar, took the place. Among the captives was Safizah, whom Mohammed, having given her liberty, married. Such treasures of the fortress as could be found, fell into the conquerors' hands. Kenana, who commanded the place, was tortured, to make him discover where the remainder of the treasure was concealed. But, with Jewish constancy, he died rather than betray the secret. The other castles were taken in succession, till, at last, the town itself surrendered. The inhabitants were allowed to cultivate their lands as before, on condition that half of the produce should go to the Moslems, and that Mohammed should remove them when he pleased. Other towns were taken in this war; and the followers of Mohammed were enriched with the spoil. His warriors were sent out in numerous excursions in all directions: and, by imposing on the conquered the choice of conversion or tribute, they

spread both his empire and his religion rapidly throughout Arabia.

The time had now arrived for Mohammed's visit to Mecca, according to the treaty of the previous year. The procession towards the city was formed at Cada, part of the mountain of Al-Hajin. Descending into the valley, Mohammed mounted Caswá, his favourite camel, the bridle being held by Abdallah marching on foot; he was surrounded by his Moslems, and preceded by seventy camels prepared for sacrifice, while the Koreish looked down upon their march from the tops of the neighbouring hills. On reaching Mecca, all the rites of visitation were ceremoniously performed, at the entrance of the temple. The *black stone* of the *Kaaba* was kissed. They then walked round the temple thrice, with a short and quick step; and then, twice, with a slow and measured pace. The hour of prayer was proclaimed by the muezzin, or crier, to those without; and the prophet and his followers ran seven times between the mountains of Saffa and Merwa—a ceremony which the traditions of the country date from the time of Hagar, the mother of Ishmael. The visitation closed by offering the camels in the valley of Mina, and

the Moslems, according to custom, shaved their heads.

This visit to Mecca was soon followed by three remarkable conversions from among the Koreish—Khaled, the greatest warrior of the age, who had defeated the Moslems at Ohad ; Amru, formerly the ambassador to Ethiopia ; and Othman, the guardian of the Kaaba. By the aid of these great men, Mohammed soon felt himself strong enough to defy all his enemies, and to aspire to the sovereignty of Arabia.—At the time when Mohammed sent his messengers to invite the several princes, formerly mentioned, to embrace his faith ; one of them was murdered by Amru Ebu Shorkeil, of the tribe of Ghaftân, at Muta, a town in Balkas, eastward of the river Jordan, which the Arab commanded in the name of the emperor Heraclius. To revenge this insult, the prophet sent Zeid, at the head of three thousand chosen troops. On the march, Zeid learned that the emperor's army of a hundred thousand was on its way to attack him. At first, he feared to encounter such an overwhelming power ; but he was urged by the persuasions of Abdallah to advance, resolved to conquer or to die. It was arranged that if Zeid fell, Juafar should

take the command, and if Juafar fell, it should devolve on Abdallah. All three were slain, one after the other ; and the Moslem troops were fleeing in consternation, when Khaled rallied the fugitives, and gained the victory. The account of this victory so delighted Mohammed that he bestowed on Khaled the title " ONE OF THE SWORDS OF GOD ;" and he described, with rapture, the crowns of the martyrs who had fallen. In private, however, he mingled his tears with the daughter of Zeid, as she wept over the death of her heroic father. " What do I see ?" said one of his followers, who beheld his grief. " You see," replied Mohammed, " a friend who is deploring the loss of his most faithful friend."

The taking of MECCA was the great event which established the authority of Mohammed. Two years of the truce had elapsed, when it was violated, as the Moslems affirmed, by the massacre of some of their allies. Abu-Sofian repaired to Mecca to renew the truce ; but Mohammed refused to admit him to his presence. He assembled all the tribes he could command in the neighbourhood of Mecca, to the amount of ten thousand men. In the light of " ten thousand fires" he advanced, clothed

in red, and seated on his camel, towards Mecca. As the sun appeared next morning above the eastern horizon, he entered the gates of the city, reciting aloud the promise of victory, which is recorded in the forty-eighth chapter of the Korân. He entered the Kaaba; destroyed three hundred and sixty idols, and proclaimed with a loud voice, as he turned to every part of the interior of the temple, "Allah acbar," God is great, "and Mohammed is his apostle." To those who attended him he said, "This is your Kebla"—the place to which they were to turn their faces in prayer; and, then, he preached, till sunset, his doctrines to the people. Sending for some of the principal men of the Koreish, he sternly said to them, "What do you expect from me, now that I have subdued you?" "Nothing but what is favourable, generous kinsman." "Go," he said, "you are a free people." He committed the care of the Kaaba to Othman and his heirs; and, for the first time, his muezzin, or crier, announced the hour of prayer from the top of the temple of Mecca.—It would not interest the reader to go through a detail of the battles, sieges, and victories, by which, from this time, Mohammed spread the power of his name, attracting the Arabs to his

standard by the plunder with which he enriched them, and multiplying his converts, both by the glories of the world and by the promises of paradise. So numerous were the ambassadors who crowded to his court at Medina, that in the poetic image of his countrymen, they exceeded the dates that fall from the ripe palm-trees.

His last great expedition was against the Greeks. Abu-Beker devoted to this expedition all his property. Camels were supplied by Omar ; and gold by Othman ; and the women gave their jewels. Clad in his green vestment, Mohammed led an army of ten thousand horse, twenty thousand foot, and twelve thousand camels, to invade the fertile land of Syria, and to destroy the empire, and the religion, of the Greeks. But the heat of the summer, the burning sands of the desert, the failure of the springs, and the pestilent winds that suffocated both man and beast, dreadfully thinned his ranks ; and his sinking companions turned with longing eyes to the harvests and the ripened fruits they had left behind them. "Hell is hotter," he exclaimed in reply to all their murmurings. When they reached Tabouck, on the confines of Syria, midway between Medina

and Damascus, they reposed beneath its grove of palm-trees ; and quenched their thirst at its fountain.

In a council of war, Mohammed acknowledged that he had no Divine command for the prosecution of the war. Omar expressed his opinion that the great power of the Roman emperor in the east could be destroyed only by degrees ; and it was agreed by all, that already they had done enough to strike the hearts of all men with the terror of their arms.

On his return to Medina, Mohammed received deputies from Tayif, the city in which he had spent a month, before his flight from Mecca, and which he had besieged without success, after the capture of the holy city. These deputies offered submission, on conditions which were haughtily refused. “ Grant us, O apostle of God, a truce of three years, with the toleration of our ancient worship.” “ Not a month—not an hour.” “ Excuse us from the obligation of prayer.” “ Without prayer, religion is of no avail.” They were obliged to surrender, and to embrace the new religion ; and their temples and their idols were destroyed. Tribe after tribe was now terrified or persuaded to follow

in his train, till he became the master of nearly all Arabia.

Mohammed's final visit to Mecca, called the pilgrimage of valediction, is the model of the pilgrimages of his followers to that city. He was accompanied by a hundred and fourteen thousand proselytes. The object of reverence is the Kaaba, or square temple. In the south-east corner of this temple, is "the black stone," between three and four feet from the ground. It is pretended that it is one of the precious stones of paradise, given by Gabriel to Ishmael for the repair of the temple; and that it was originally white, but has been turned black by the sins of the people. Near to the Kaaba is the station of Abraham, referred to in the third chapter of the Korân, as a place appointed by God for prayer, and where they profess to show the print of the patriarch's foot in a stone! On the east, inclosed within walls, and covered by a cupola, is the well *zem-zem*, which they describe as the well to which Hagar was directed by the angel, to the waters of which the most miraculous virtues are ascribed.* The white

* Its water is sent in bottles to the neighbouring countries, and many pilgrims carefully preserve the robe that has been washed in it, for their winding-sheet.

stone, or tomb of Ishmael, is on the west side of the Kaaba.

The temple itself is covered with black damask, embroidered with a golden band, which is changed every year. The inclosure in which it stands, terminates in a square piazza or arcade, of five hundred columns, with thirty-eight gates. This piazza is covered with small cupolas, and from each of the four corners rises a tall minaret, with double galleries. Both the cupolas and minarets are surmounted by gilded crescents. The whole is a quarter of a mile in length, and about the same in breadth. It is capable of holding thirty-five thousand persons ; and the cool and fragrant breezes of the area are ascribed, by " the faithful," to the waving of the wings of the ten thousand angels, under whose guardian care it is placed. It was to the Kaaba, or square building standing in this inclosure, that Mohammed made his pilgrimage.

The ceremonies performed by Mohammed were not very different from those of his former visit, which have been described : only, on this occasion, he made a fuller profession of the fundamental doctrines of his religion, and ex-

plained the reason of all the ceremonies as laid down in the Korân.*

On entering the Jewish town of Chaibar, after its capitulation, the conqueror was entertained in the house of Hareth. Zainah, one of Hareth's daughters, placed before him for his supper, a shoulder of mutton, which she had previously poisoned. One of his companions, partaking largely of the supper, died soon after; and Mohammed himself, though more sparing in his repast, received an injury from which he never recovered. On his return from the pilgrimage to Mecca, his health declined. Acute pains in the head, and violent fever, gave warning of his approaching end. Having summoned his wives to his presence, he desired that Ayesha would nurse him in his sickness, and he was removed to her apartment. Here he was visited by the mother of his companion who had been poisoned at Chaibar. On seeing her, he said, "O mother of Bashar! the veins of my heart are now breaking of the meat which I ate with thy son at Chaibar."

The next day he went to the mosque, sup-

* The temple of Mecca is described by the intelligent and lamented Burckhardt, in his *Travels in Arabia*, 2 vols. 8vo. 1829.

ported by Ali, and another of his friends. He publicly prayed for the pardon of his sins ; then, mounting the pulpit, he addressed the people : “ O men, if I have ever cruelly scourged any man, let me be beaten with the same stripes ; if I have wounded any man’s good name, let mine own be wounded ; if I have defrauded any man, I am here to do him justice.” A man in the congregation said, “ Thou owest me three silver drachms.” He immediately paid him, saying, “ It is better to be put to shame now, than in the world to come.” He then offered the noon-day prayer, especially remembering the dead. In his last charge to his most faithful adherents, he enjoined that they should drive out all idolaters from Arabia ; that they should allow to proselytes all the privileges they enjoyed themselves ; and that they should be diligent in prayer. For the last three days, he was confined to his apartment. He gave freedom to many of his slaves. Calling for pen, ink, and paper, that he might write his last directions to his followers, he was opposed by Omar, and a dispute arose, which Mohammed checked by telling them that they were not to dispute in his presence. He told his friends that the angel of death had asked his

permission to approach him, and that he had consented. Leaning his head on Ayesha's lap, he fainted ; then, raising his eyes, and saying with a broken voice, " Yes—with the celestial companions,"—he stretched himself on the carpet and expired, in the eleventh year of the Hegira, and in the sixty-third year of his age.

Many of the people found it hard to believe it possible that their prophet could be dead. " The apostle of God is not dead," cried Omar, " he is gone for forty days, like Moses, Ebu Amram—or, like Issa Ebu Mairyan, he is gone to heaven to return;" and, unsheathing his scimitar, he swore " that if any man said that the prophet was dead, he would cut him to pieces." But these transports were appeased by the wisdom of Abu-Beker, who, mildly addressing them, said,—" Whom do you worship? Mohammed, or the God of Mohammed? If you worship God, know that he liveth for ever; but Mohammed is declared in the Korân to be a mortal, and he has shared the common fate of mortals."

A serious dispute arose respecting the burial of the deceased prophet. Some were for having him removed to Mecca, his birthplace and their

own ; others, to Jerusalem the city of the prophets ; but Abu-Beker again interposed, remarking that he had often heard the prophet say, that “ a prophet should be buried where he died.” It was, therefore, agreed that he should be kept at Medina. The body was placed in a magnificent tent, and reverently washed by Ali with purest water. They then embalmed it in camphor, and, with the most fragrant aromatics, they anointed the face, the palms of the hands, and the soles of the feet ; afterwards they wrapped it in a garment of white, and placed around it pieces of amber, musk, and sweet-smelling woods. When these preparations were completed, his family led the funeral procession, followed by the surviving companions of his flight, by the principal citizens of Medina, and by a silent crowd of men, women, and children. The prayers were drawn from the Korân ; his burial-place was beneath the chamber where he died.—A story which the Latin writers seem to have borrowed from Pliny’s description of a temple at Alexandria, describes his coffin of iron, suspended in the midst of loadstones, at Mecca. There is no foundation for such a notion, since it is well

known that he was buried at Medina; that coffins are not used by the Arabs; and that this story was never heard of in the east. It is a curious fact, that the great caravans of pilgrims go to Mecca—not Medina: the latter is not enjoined as part of their religion; the holiest shrine of their peculiar worship is poorer in gifts than many European churches. Still some portion—perhaps one-third—of the pilgrims turn from the track of the desert to gratify their curiosity, or their superstition, by their voluntary devotion before the tomb of the prophet of Arabia.

“We are very destitute of satisfactory materials for the history of Mohammed. Abulfeda, the most judicious of his biographers, lived in the fourteenth century, when it must have been morally impossible to discriminate the truth amidst the torrent of fabulous tradition. Al-Jannabi, whom Gagnier translated, is a mere legend writer; it would be as rational to quote the *Acta Sanctorum* as his romance. It is, therefore, difficult to ascertain the real character of the prophet, except as it is deducible from the Korân; and some sceptical orientalis, if I am not mistaken, have called in

question the absolute genuineness even of that. Gibbon has hardly apprised the reader sufficiently of the crumbling foundation upon which his narrative of Mohammed's life and actions depends."*

* Hallam: Hist. Mid. Ages, vol. i. c. 6.

CHAPTER III.

CHARACTER OF MOHAMMED.

THE character of Mohammed may be impartially estimated. No service is done to truth by refusing to examine it with candour. As in many other cases, a calm judgment will keep us at equal distance from the ignorance or bigotry of one extreme, and from the sentimental admiration, or assuming philosophy, of another. All the authorities have represented him as a man of the most fascinating qualities, both in mind and body. We have no proof that his youth was otherwise than harmless and grave, according to the notions of his age, and the manners of his country; and few can have given unprejudiced attention to what is known of his early manhood without inclining to the opinion that, at first, he *might imagine* himself to be called by heaven to turn his people from idolatry. Few things are more

difficult than the attempt to explain the character of a man who has risen to eminence, by ascribing all his actions to one motive. It may be shown, as not at all unlikely, that Mohammed's motives differed, at various stages of his career. The young merchant crossing the desert, the hermit of the cave, the obscure and persecuted teacher, and the warrior at the head of innumerable tribes, giving the reins to his sensual desires—these are situations in life not naturally arising the one from the other; and it is too short and superficial an account of the matter to say, that the impostor planned it all. It is not impossible for the dreams of enthusiasm to kindle the fires of ambition. The quick imagination, and the heated passions of a man of genius, without letters, yet not without reflection, nor without observation, are not necessarily incompatible with the love of power; and the ambition of an enthusiast will find excuses for every crime by which he may gain his end. We are obliged to veil some of the darkest features of Mohammed's character, because we could not expose them, without offence to the decencies of Christian life. Could there be a severer condemnation of a teacher of religion, than the

necessity of thus passing over some essential points in his character ? After all the excuses and palliations which have been made, whether by Mohammedans or by infidels, for this feature in the character of the pretended prophet, it remains—a black spot—which no ingenuity can wash away. The restraint or concealment of his early years can never excuse the unbridled sensuality, even as compared with other men of the same age, and of the same nation, in which Mohammed indulged, when his acknowledged authority seemed to raise him above the need of caution. And we can apply no softer term than deliberate wickedness to the shameless craft with which he imposed upon the people, by pretending that what was, in others, a degradation and a sin, was granted to him as a special privilege by God !

Of his cruelty we may speak more freely. He probably was not naturally cruel. The amiableness of his private life is the perpetual theme of the writers of his own country. Many of the precepts he gave his followers, some of his laws, and not a few of his actions, would rather give one the impression that he was humane, and of a gentle disposition. His

fidelity to Chadijah, and his touching language respecting her, have often been admired : and they deserve to be admired. Ayesha once said to him, as he spoke with tenderness of his first wife, " Was not Chadijah old, and has not God given you a better in her place ? " " No ! There never was a kinder or a better woman. She trusted in me when men mocked me and despised me ; she relieved my wants when I was poor, and persecuted by the world : she was entirely devoted to me."

There are two portions of his life easily distinguished—the time in which he was labouring to acquire influence with his countrymen, and struggling with difficulties ; and the time in which he was armed with power to accomplish his designs. In the former part, he was, outwardly at least, humble, insinuating, kind to the poor, and submissive to the great : in the latter part, he was impetuous, harsh, and sanguinary. Believing, or affecting to believe, that he was commissioned from above to propagate his religion by the sword, he not only spread around him the desolation that marks the footprints of the conqueror, but he gratified his private resentments, and murdered his prisoners in cold blood. He was cruel on

principle; he did deliberately, what other men do from impulse. For these terrible acts of fierce brutality, he made, not the excuses of human passion, nor the usual plea of tyrants—the necessity of his situation—but the blasphemous attempt to bring forward the sanction of Heaven.

In a large portion of his life, we must regard him as, in the strictest and strongest sense of the word, an IMPOSTOR. In whatever degree he might have confounded his dreams with realities, or the workings of his waking imagination with the visits of an angel, he must have known that a great part of what he gave out as truth was false. Can anything be more base—more contemptible, in a teacher of religion more intolerable, in a man endowed with power more terrible, than this?

The ambition which tramples on the right of men to think or to live, is the greatest of human crimes. It is disgusting to hear men talk of Mohammed's poverty, of his temperance in eating, of his abstinence from wine, of his humility in sweeping the house, and in mending his shoes, as if these were inconsistent with ambition, or as if they lessened its enormity. One passion frequently becomes so strong, as to

absorb all others. To be feared by a whole nation, and to be acknowledged as the prophet of God, were the ambition of Mohammed. He could not gratify this ambition without paying the price; and he paid it. When it was necessary he sacrificed to his ambition, truth, justice, kindness, his own gratifications, and the lives of other men. This was selfishness on a grand scale, guided by vanity and cunning, and securing the power to give the reins to every indulgence whenever he thought it safe.

The limitation of human abilities always demands that some sacrifice shall be made if our master passion is to be indulged; and we know of no sacrifice that was ever made by Mohammed which cannot be thus explained.

Without painting this extraordinary man as an impossible monster, without refusing to him the qualities of mind and heart which were necessary to secure his success, we may say of him in sober truth, that he was pre-eminently *a bad man*.

The person of Mohammed is described by the Arabian writers with great minuteness. He was of middle stature, had a large head, his beard was thick, his eyes black and piercing, his nose hooked, his mouth wide, his neck

thick, his hair long and flowing; a hairy mole between his shoulders was called "the seal of his apostleship." His appearance was beautiful and majestic.

"His numerous and splendid victories were not only the efficacious means of extending his power, and of realising the hopes which ambition had inspired; but they were, also, eventually subservient to the gratification of a passion, less generous indeed, though not less violent in its impulses, or less forcible in its influence on the human heart. Whilst the wretched victims of his power were sacrificed to his cruelty or policy, a still severer fate awaited the female captive, who was compelled to submit to the base and inordinate desires of a barbarian conqueror, and was forced into those arms which were stained with the recent slaughter of a friend, a brother, or a parent.

"From every view of the life of Mohammed, and even from the partial representations of his zealous and infatuated followers, it is evident that ambition and lust were the passions which divided the empire of his breast. From the separate, or united, influence of these powerful principles, it would not be difficult to trace almost every great design, and every important

action, of his life. Hence originated the grand and stupendous scheme of his imposture ; and hence we observe each subordinate fact throughout its whole contexture, pointing, immediately or ultimately, to the gratification of one or both of these predominant passions.

“During his earlier years, indeed, every measure seems to have been dictated, and every inferior consideration utterly absorbed, by an unvaried attention to the pursuits and interests of ambition. The nature of his undertaking, particularly in its first stage, required no common degree of prudence and caution. That policy, which formed so distinguishing a part of his character, doubtless compelled him, for awhile, to conceal, if not to restrain, the indulgence of irregular passions : lest the licentiousness of his manners should give offence to those whose good opinion it was his object to conciliate ; and the immorality of his practice, by betraying the secret motives and propensities of his heart, should unravel the web which his hypocrisy was weaving, before it had acquired sufficient strength and consistence. Hence, both before, and during, the first years of his pretended mission, whilst his daring schemes were yet immature, and their success

uncertain, the artful impostor, as we have reason to believe, regulated every part of his conduct by the strict rules of external decorum. But, no sooner was his reputation as a prophet established; no sooner was his authority rooted too firmly to be shaken by any common or ordinary event, and his ambition in some measure satiated by the possession of power, than another passion arose; and, shaking off the restraint which had hitherto suppressed it, with a violence equally arbitrary, now hurried him away into the wildest extravagances.

“At length, his attention to the cold and jealous cautions of prudence ceased with its necessity; and from an affectation of exemplary purity of manners, he now rushed into the most public and criminal excesses of sensual indulgence. That address to the carnal appetites which permitted so liberal an indulgence in the present life, and promised them complete and eternal gratification in another, was one of the most alluring snares which he so successfully spread to captivate his countrymen. The laws which he prescribed for the regulation of these passions were too loose for the most compliant moralist to justify; and too favourable to afford the most abandoned sensualist any probable

ground of complaint. . . . That the impostor, by the opinions which he introduced, really improved the manners of the Arabs, cannot, perhaps, be denied: the religion which he established, amidst all its errors and absurdities, possesses many principles in common with the true, and is, doubtless, in every respect, far preferable to that absurd and monstrous idolatry which was then the prevailing creed of Arabia. But, when we consider its more extensive diffusion and ultimate consequences,—when we reflect on the excellence of that perfect and lovely system of doctrine and morals which it threatened to destroy, and whose benignant influence it still continues fatally to obstruct; when we call to mind the immense multitudes of our fellow-creatures who are yet involved by its delusions in the most profound darkness and error, our opinion concerning him and his imposture is at once determined, and we behold both in their native features of horrid and almost unmixed deformity.”*

* White's Bampton Lectures. Serm. ix.

CHAPTER IV.

RELIGION OF MOHAMMED.

THE life of Mohammed would be not only incomplete, but incapable of being understood, if we did not give a brief account of the doctrines of his religion. These doctrines he preached with great zeal and eloquence: besides preaching them, he produced them in fragments of a book which was delivered, piecemeal, through a period of twenty-three years. This book is the Korân, an Arabic word of nearly the same meaning with our word Bible, or book; only the word is applied to any separate passage, the reading, as well as to the whole. The syllable *al*, sometimes printed *alcoran*, is merely the Arabic emphatic syllable, corresponding to our definite article, *the*.

This book, as we now have it, is divided into a hundred and fourteen *suras*—rows, or portions, of unequal length, some containing only

three or four short verses, and others as many as three hundred. Such is the reverence in which it is held by Mohammedans, that they never touch it without performing certain ablutions; they will write verses from it on their banners, and on the walls of their mosques; and they place copies of it in boxes of gold or silver, which they carry with them as amulets or charms. The khalifs had it adorned with precious stones; and the Othman emperors still follow their example. Parts of it were printed from time to time by the great Arabic scholars of Europe, such as Erpenius, and Golius; and the whole has been frequently printed. We have now lying before us a beautifully printed copy from the press of Tauchnitz, the eminent printer at Leipsic, edited by Dr. Fluegel, in 1834. It has been translated from the Arabic into the Persian, Turkish, Javan, and Malay languages, for the use of Mohammedans; and, for the gratification of Christian scholars, into Latin, and all the modern languages of Europe.

The importance of this book will be seen when it is recollected that it is not only a book of religious doctrines, but the ground-work of all the civil and criminal laws in Mohammedan countries.

Besides the Korân, the Mohammedans have a body of traditions purporting to be the sayings of the prophet, which they call *sonna*, or custom. The adherents to these traditions are called Sonnites, or orthodox Mohammedans, and their opponents, those who reject this book of traditions, are called Shiites, or Sectaries. The religious doctrines of the Korân are taught in a most confused and incoherent manner.

When Mohammed was called on to prove his Divine mission by miracles, he appealed to the Korân. The Korân, however, sometimes contradicts itself; and this inconvenient fact is explained by saying that the later revelations were designed to supersede those which came before.—Though Mohammed himself was thus cautious in even pretending to work a visible miracle, his followers, in later times, have not been so prudent. Many miracles, attributed to him, are generally credited among that people. They believe that gravel in his hand was heard to sing; that he was orally addressed by various animals; that streams of water flowed from between his fingers; and that, at his bidding, the moon leaped from the firmament, rolled seven times round the Kaaba, and then rested on its top, addressed Mohammed

in the language and form used by his followers, entered his right sleeve, and departed by the left, and, having traversed every part of his mantle, separated into two parts, and, ascending through the air, resumed its former appearance.

Mohammed pretended that the whole Korân was written in a book in heaven ; but that it was brought down to him by the angel Gabriel from time to time, as occasion required. These portions were treasured up in the memory of his disciples, or written on the leaves of palm-trees, or on the skins of animals. To one of his wives was a collection of these writings given in charge, which Abu-Beker, his first successor, or khalif, arranged in one volume.

A few years after, Othman, the third khalif, called in all the copies, and having destroyed them, issued a new volume, which is the existing Korân. Each chapter has a characteristic title, as, the Cow, the Family of Imram, Women, the Star, the Table, Castle, the Spoils, the Night Journey, the Pilgrimage, the Poets, the Moon, the Brightness.

At the head of each chapter is mentioned the name of the place where it was dictated,

“revealed at Mecca;” or “revealed at Medina.” Excepting the ninth, they all begin with the *Bismillah*—“In the name of the most merciful God.” The language is the standard of the classic Arabic, and it is taught at Mecca as a dead language. It is written in prose, but read with a kind of chant. The design of the whole is thus expressed by the learned Golius, in his appendix to the Arabic Grammar of Erpenius. “The general design of the Korân seems to be this : to unite the professors of the three religions then followed in the populous country of Arabia, who, for the most part, lived promiscuously and wandered without guides (the greater part being idolaters, and the rest Jews and Christians, most of them erroneous and heterodox,) in the knowledge and worship of one eternal, invisible God established under the sanction of certain laws, and the outward signs of certain ceremonies, partly of ancient, partly of modern, institution, and enforced by setting before them rewards and punishments, both temporal and eternal : and to bring them all to the obedience of Mohammed the prophet and ambassador of God, who, after the repeated admonitions, promises, and threats, of former

ages, was, at last, to establish and propagate God's religion on earth by force of arms, and to be acknowledged chief pontiff in spiritual matters, as well as supreme prince in temporal."

The proof of the divinity of the Korân to which Mohammed appealed, was the perfection of its style, as the production of an illiterate man.

Of this perfection it is not easy for foreigners to judge, especially if they can read the book only in a translation. In this respect, however, it is in the same circumstances with all the other books with which it could be compared. Impartial writers have acknowledged the elegance of the diction, the sublimity of some of the sentiments, the pure morals frequently inculcated, and the occasional grandeur of imagination, by which the Korân is distinguished. But they deny to it the praise of ORIGINALITY. They trace it partly to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, partly to the Talmud, and Rabbinical traditions; partly to apocryphal gospels; and partly to the fables then current in Arabia. It bears not the slightest comparison, in sublimity, with the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. To the information of those Scriptures it adds,

of course, nothing ; and it contains much that contradicts them. It borrows from the early heretics their silliest misrepresentations of the facts of the New Testament. It often contradicts itself.—While these are the just opinions of enlightened Europeans, we need not wonder that this production has been so greatly admired by the Arabs, who have always prided themselves on the richness and beauty of their language, who had never been a literary people, who were shut out entirely from the literature of other nations, whose ancestors received the Korân at the point of the sword, and who have been trained, generation after generation, in an implicit and superstitious veneration for this book.

The chapters given out at Mecca abound in sentiments of toleration. The chapters revealed at Medina, after Mohammed became powerful enough to defend himself and to attack his enemies, breathe the fiercest spirit of war against the unbelievers. “The sword,” he then preached, “is the key of heaven and hell ; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent under arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer ; whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven ; at the day of

judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermilion, and odoriferous as musk ; and the loss of his limbs shall be replaced by the wings of angels." Several chapters of the Korân are filled with exhortations to fight in spreading its doctrines : by appealing to the courage, the ambition, the rapacity, and the lust, of a wild and enthusiastic people with weapons in their hands, and plunder and captives within their view, the eloquent fanatic roused them to the highest pitch of ardour in his service.

We must not pass over his sensual descriptions of paradise, without remarking the degraded views of the most exalting subjects by which men were at once deluded and excited.

It would be unfair to say that the religion of Mohammed is entirely false ; yet by mixing falsehood with truth, by blending a few of the best sentiments of morality with the most pernicious maxims ; by representing a harsh and unmeaning jumble of ceremonies as acceptable worship ; and by requiring from all men of every nation the pilgrimage to Mecca, which was nothing better than perpetuating the idolatrous custom of one nation ;—Mohammed has introduced a system which is vicious, narrow-minded, and injurious to all the interests which

enlightened men agree to regard as essential to the virtue and the happiness of our race.

Besides these defects and glaring evils, we cannot forget that his system is wanting in the three grand essentials of religion.

1. It is wanting in *evidence*. He gave no proof that he was commissioned of God. He wrought no miracle ; for though his followers, in later times, have ascribed to him innumerable miracles, he confesses, over and over again, in the Korân, that he did not work any. The Korân itself is offered as a miracle. But it is not a miracle to produce a book in the course of twenty-three years. It is ridiculous to call a man ignorant, who belonged to the highest family of the first tribe of a highly civilized people, living in the centre of the commercial world, and whose situation gave him the most favourable opportunities both for gathering materials for knowledge in his travels, and for working up those materials by a powerful genius, in years of solitary thought. It is far from being certain—though it is the received opinion—that he could not write ; but, whether he could write or not, there is nothing supernatural in his dictating such sentences as are contained in the Korân. How strong the con-

trast with the religion of the New Testament, which has passed through every test of truth that faith could desire, or unbelief invent ; and which, by all these tests alike, has been proved to be the truth of God ! Hosts of witnesses attest the facts asserted in the New Testament : there is not one witness of any one fact recorded in the Korân, to prove the truth of the religion of Mohammed.

2. It is wanting in the revelation of *a sacrifice*. There is no *atonement*. There is no way of approach to God for pardon, consistent with his unchangeable character, and with his perfect law. The Mosaic ritual abounded in sacrifices which reminded the worshipper of guilt, and led his hopes to the Saviour whom it was the grand object of prophecy to foretell. The Christian religion, which explains, fulfils, and absorbs the Hebrew dispensations, makes known a Saviour, whose dignity as "God manifest in the flesh" is without limit, whose willing obedience to a broken law is accepted in behalf of all who trust in Him, whose death was an atonement for sin, and who is able to save, because he ever lives to intercede. To this refuge the troubled conscience flies. Here the self-condemned penitent finds peace. He

who must have fled, in terror, from the wrath to come, is reconciled to God, and rejoices in Him as the Father whom he loves, and serves, and praises. Of this atonement, which the law of the Hebrew tribes foreshadowed, of which the prophets of the ancients spake, and which the gospel of the Son of God sets forth as its peculiar glory, Mohammed knew not, or, knowing it, denied, and hid from the millions who have looked up to him as their guide to heaven. All the prayers, and vows, and fastings, and pilgrimages, and fighting with the infidel,—what are they to quell the storm of a conscience awakened to the truth? what are *they*, to expiate offences against God?

3. It is wanting in *power*. It has no power to renew the corrupt heart; to purify the affections, and the imagination; to sustain the soul in sorrow; and to guide the life in paths of self-denying virtue. All its motives are of the lowest, some of the most degrading, order. Its prayers are not for inward grace. There is no allusion to the Holy Ghost. Man is left to his own strength. He knows of nothing higher, nothing better. There is no provision for his deepest wants, his constant wants, his universal wants. He can learn nothing from Mohammed

of that great struggle which ends in the conquest of himself, and in the only real conquest of the world. He has no example set before him, at once authoritative, tender, and perfect, of that which he should desire, and which he must become. There is nothing resembling the freedom in which the true Christian rejoices, walking humbly and watchfully, yet cheerfully, with God. It is earthly, sensual, devilish, false, empty, weak. It is the religion of the fanatic, of the warrior, of the slave : it is no religion for men, women, children, such as fill our world ; and it is as impossible that it should be universal, as it is that it should become true.

If the Korân be compared with the mythologies of Greece, or the shasters of Hindostân, its superiority is most striking. Its sublime descriptions of God ; its maintenance of the Divine unity ; its assertion of providence, and moral government ; its appeals to a future judgment, and to the rewards and punishments of a world to come ; the beautiful imagery with which it adorns the maxims of virtue ; the impartiality with which the poor as well as the rich are taught ;—all these are proofs of the advantages derived by Mohammed from the

Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. But Mohammed showed these truths by mixing them with fables, contradictions, and blasphemies ; with foolish mummeries, and with fierce and bloody principles ; and the entire system was moulded to the one base purpose of bringing the sanctions of religion to support his schemes of lust and conquest. It is only by contrasting the Korân with the New Testament—Mohammed with Jesus—and Christianity with Islamism,—that we learn how infinite is the difference between them.

CHAPTER V.

HISTORY OF ISLAMISM.

ISLAM is the name given by Mohammed to his doctrine ; and from this word are derived all the words which appear in so many shapes in our English spelling—Moslem, Mussulman, Islamism. The radical idea is that of faith. The belief of the Korân is Islam, or Islamism ; the believer is a Moslem, or a Mussulman ; the body of them are Moslemim, Moslems, or Mussulmans : it is not proper to call them *Mussulmen*.

The doctrine was connected with political subjection to the prophet as a chief. Before his death, he omitted to appoint a successor ; though, at the outset, it will be remembered that he chose *Ali* as his khalif, which means substitute, or successor. The question of succession was not without difficulties, but these ended in the appointment, first, of Abu-Beker ;

next, of Omar; after him, of Othman; and then, of Ali. Abu-Beker, despising, or affecting to despise, the titles of royalty, simply styled himself the khalif, or successor, of Mohammed. Finding that the Arabs were likely to fall back into their old idolatry, now that the prophet was dead, Abu-Beker appealed to their pride by saying, "Ye men of Mecca! will ye be the last to embrace, and then the first to forsake, the religion of Islam?" The appeal was successful. Khaled avowed himself the enemy of apostates, and, at the head of a band of fiery enthusiasts, he defeated the scattered tribes of the desert, and brought them back to the belief in one God, and in Mohammed as his prophet.

The reign of Abu-Beker was signalized by the destruction of a formidable opponent in Moseilama, a rival prophet, who was cut off by the intrepid Khaled. Moseilama had proclaimed himself a prophet during the life of Mohammed, and had offered to him a portion of the world; but the offer was disdainfully rejected. After Mohammed's death, he raised a powerful army, and defeated Khaled at the head of forty thousand men; but while the unbelievers were elated with their success, the

Moslems were roused by their losses, and, in another battle, they slew Moseilama himself, and ten thousand of his followers.—The correspondence between the rival impostors is curious. “From Moseilama, the apostle of God, to Mohammed, the apostle of God. Now, let the earth be half thine and half mine.” “From Mohammed, the apostle of God, to Moseilama, the liar: the earth is God’s: he giveth the same for inheritance unto such of his servants as he pleaseth; and the happy issue shall attend those who fear him.”

Then followed, A.D. 634, the invasion of Syria; the capture of Bozrah by the zeal of Khaled, and by the treachery of the governor; and the fall of Damascus, of which the tidings reached the khalif on the bed of death.—The last battle of the Greeks, or Romans of the east, in defence of their crumbling empire, was lost on the banks of the Yermouk, a small stream that falls into the sea of Tiberias. After four weeks of siege in the depths of winter, A.D. 637, Jerusalem fell into the hands of the fierce invaders, who—with an interval of ninety years after the earlier crusades—have possessed it ever since; and the mosque of Omar rose proudly on the site of Solomon’s temple, where

it still stands.—Aleppo was taken, A.D. 638, by the ferocious daring of a volunteer, named Decimes, who, leaning against a wall, supporting seven of his strongest companions, mounted in succession, one on the shoulders of another, till the topmost gained the battlements, and the rest were drawn up by their unfolded turbans. Antioch, the capital of Syria, was taken, A.D. 638, by surprise; and Heraclius, the emperor of the east, saved himself by an ignominious flight to Constantinople.

Not the least remarkable of these conquests was that of Jerusalem. To this holy city Mohammed himself has directed his thoughts, as the burial-place of the ancient prophets, in whom he always professed to have as great an interest as either the Jews or the Christians. After the taking of Damascus, the Saracen commander was ordered by Omar to go to Jerusalem. The inhabitants having fearlessly stood a siege of ten days, Abu-Obeidah sent them the following letter:—"In the name of the most merciful God. From Abu-Obeidah Ebn Al' Jeradh, to the chief commanders of Ælia and the inhabitants thereof: health and happiness to every one that follows the right way, and believes in God and the apostle.

We require of you to testify that there is but one God, and Mohammed is his apostle ; and that there shall be a day of judgment, when God shall raise the dead out of their sepulchres ; and, when you have borne witness to this, it is unlawful for us either to shed your blood, or to meddle with your substance or your children. If you refuse this—consent to pay tribute, and be under us forthwith ; otherwise, I will bring men against you, who love death better than you love the drinking of wine, or eating hog's flesh ; nor will I ever stir from you, if it please God, till I have destroyed those that fight for you, and made slaves of your children."

After holding out four months longer, the patriarch, Sophronius, agreed to surrender, on condition of receiving the articles of protection from the khalif's own hand. Omar, the khalif, being persuaded by Ali, said his prayers in the mosque, proceeded on a red camel, with two sacks of sawick (a kind of rice) and fruit, and a leathern skin for water, administering justice as he travelled. When he approached Jerusalem, he was met by Abu-Obeidah. He pitched his tent, made of coarse hair-cloth, within sight of the holy city ; and, after a short parley, gave the patriarch the

conditions he desired. They were substantially the same with those on which treaties with Christians were formed ever after. He demanded heavy tribute, and imposed a permanent tax ; forbade their using the same names, or wearing the same dress, as the Moslems ; they were not to ride on saddles, to carry arms, to sell wine, or to engrave Arabic words on their seals. They were not to fix crosses on the outside of their churches, nor to show them on their bosoms openly in the presence of Moslems in the streets ; neither might they ring, but only toll, their bell. They were strictly forbidden to have a servant who had belonged to a Moslem ; or to overlook the Moslems in their houses : on these terms they had freedom of life, property, and worship. “ Jerusalem, once the glory of the east, was forced to submit to a heavier yoke than ever it had borne before : for, though the number of the slain and the calamities of the besieged were greater when it was taken by the Romans ; yet, the servitude of those that survived was nothing comparable to this, either in respect to the circumstances, or the duration. For, however it might seem to be ruined and destroyed by Titus ; yet, by Hadrian’s time, it had greatly

recovered itself. Now it fell, as it were, once for all, into the hands of the most mortal enemies of the Christian religion ; and has continued so ever since : with the exception of brief intervals of about ninety years, during which it was held by Christians in the holy war.”*

Khaled, the conqueror of Syria, died of sickness and wounded pride ; and the tears of OMAR fell upon his tomb at Emessa. Khaled was succeeded by Amrou, his equal in arms, and his superior in policy. By the conquest of Egypt, A.D. 633, Amrou supplied the wants of his countrymen, who were sinking under a dreadful famine. After a tremendous conflict, he gained “ *the victory of victories*,” by laying Persia at the feet of Omar, before Omar’s assassination by Firuz, in the mosque of Medina, devolved this growing empire on Othman, (A.D. 644.) Othman’s general, Abdullah—helped by the heroic and romantic Zobeid—pushed the conquest of Africa as far as Tripoli ; and Zobeid had scarcely brought the tidings to his master at Medina, when the palace gates were forced by rebels, and the khalif, vainly defended by Hofran and Hofrein,

* Ockley’s History of the Saracens. Omar. Hej. 16. A.D. 637.

the sons of Ali, was murdered, as he was reading the Korân in his chamber. At his death, the splendid empire of Arabia, to which, twenty-two years from the decease of Mohammed, were now added Syria, Persia, and Egypt, passed into the hands of ALI, the cousin—the early convert, and the son-in-law—of the prophet. Eloquent and bold, but rash, his reign was troubled by the disaffection of his own soldiers, who burned to revenge the death of Omar, and by a civil war, headed by Mouwizah. In open fight, Ali had the mastery; but he fell by the assassin's dagger, in the mosque of Cufah, in the sixty-third year of his age, (A.D. 660.) One of his sons was poisoned: the other was betrayed, pierced in the mouth by an arrow, as he sat down alone, worn and wounded, to taste a drop of water at the door of his tent, and slain by the stroke of three-and-thirty swords and lances.

It is difficult, in so small a history, to present, unless it be in miniature, the leading features of so remarkable a character as ALI. He is said to have been born in the temple of Mecca. He was the first of the family of Hashem, to which Mohammed belonged, to embrace his religion. The prophet said of him,

“ Ali is for me, and I am for him; he stands to me, as Aaron did to Moses: I am the town in which all knowledge is shut up, and he is the gate of it.” Ali’s reputation for wisdom was so great, that many of his writings have been preserved with great care, and translated into the languages of the east. More than a hundred pithy sayings still attest his sagacity and his wit. The following are some of them :—

“ He that would be rich without means, powerful without subjects, and subject without a master, hath nothing to do but to leave off serving and serve God, and he will find these three things.”

Being asked, impudently, by one of his officers, why the reigns of Abu-Beker and Omar were peaceable, while that of Othman, his predecessor, and his own, were disturbed by divisions, Ali replied,—“ Othman and I served Abu-Beker and Omar; but Othman and myself had none to serve us, but you, and such as you.”

On his seal he had inscribed, “ The kingdom belongs to the only mighty God.”

One day, Mohammed and Ali were eating dates. Mohammed slyly put all the shells on Ali’s plate; and, when the dates were eaten,

said, "He who has most shells must have eaten most." "No," replied Ali, "he must have eaten most who has swallowed shells and all."

A man having dreamed that another had secretly committed a crime against him, asked Ali if he might not inflict on the criminal the punishment decreed in the law. Ali said, "Place him in the sun, and beat his shadow."

The descendants of Ali, though excluded from the sovereignty, have, in all ages, been revered by the Mohammedans as the children of their prophet. In Syria and in Turkey, where they form a thirtieth part of the nation, they are distinguished by the green turban, and are called Emirs. In Persia, India, and Africa, they are called Seids. In Arabia they are called Scherifs, or Seids.

Moawiha, the rival of Ali, was raised by the army to the khalifate, and, being of the same tribe, though not the same family, with Mohammed, he prevailed over the claim of Ali's children, and of the children of Abbas, the prophet's uncle; and he founded in his own house a line of khalifs, the Ommiades, that retained the throne for ninety years. At the end of those years, a revolution was effected

in favour of Il'drakim, son of the great grandson of Abbas. From this time, (A.D. 750,) the empire was divided into three distinct governments, in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Before the division, however, it had extended in Africa to Carthage, to Tangiers, and to Morocco; and on the eastern shore of the Atlantic the grandeur of the Saracens was attested by the pillars of porphyry and Numidian marble, which adorned their temple, (A.D. 709.)

Roderick, the last of the Gothic kings, was now on the throne of Spain, (A.D. 709.) Tarik, a hero of the Saracens, crossed the straits that separate Africa from Europe with a band of seven thousand men, pitched his camp on Mount Calfe, one of the pillars of Hercules, and gave his name to the fortress of Gebel al Tarik, now softened into Gibraltar. The fate of the Gothic kingdom was determined on the banks of the Guadalet, near Xeres; and Roderick, escaping from the field on his fleetest horse, was lost in the Guadalquivir. Other warriors preached the Korân in the countries watered by the Indus, and amid the snows of Tartary in the city of Sarmacand. China submitted to their power, (A.D. 710.) At Constantinople, (A.D. 718,) they were checked, for a time, by the Greek

Fire.* In the west, they crossed the Pyrenees, hoisted their standard at Bourdeaux, at Tours, at Lens, at Lyons, and at Besançon, (A.D. 731.) For a thousand miles, they stretched from Gibraltar to the Loire; and, had they crossed the Rhine, there is nothing improbable in the supposition of the historian, that the Korân might at this day have been expounded in the pulpits of Oxford and of London.

We see, in this fact, what Gibbon did not see—or would not acknowledge—the overruling providence of God, in stopping the waves of this fearful inundation, so that they reached not the nation which He designed to be the home of Christian truth, and its centre for the world. While we think of what, probably, would have been the consequences of the extension of the Mohammedan conquests to the western parts of Europe, it cannot be superstitious to observe, with devout thanksgiving to God, that the passage of the Rhine was not an impossibility to a race of warriors who had crossed the Euphrates and the Nile; and the plains of Germany, or the hills and vales of

* “The Greek Fire” was a composition of naphtha, sulphur, and pitch, employed by the Greeks in the seventh century. See a long account of it in Gibbon, chap. 52.

England, were not less easy of access to experienced conquerors than the champaign of Burgundy, or the mountains of Spain. Though we are not to imagine that the providence of God wrought miracles for their defeat, the battle of European liberty, which was won by Charles Martel and his Germans for all following ages, in the heart of France, cannot be understood, in all its bearings, without acknowledging the presence of that Power, by which the footsteps of armies, and the ambition of conquerors, are made to work out the purposes of his eternal wisdom.

Charles Martel rallied his forces to meet the enemy in the heart of France ; and they were driven from the land by the sturdy Germans, through whom the western world was thus saved by the unseen hand of God, (A.D. 750.)

On the sea, (A.D. 647,) the victorious Saracens wrested Cyprus from the empire of the east ; and Rhodes, Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily, were subdued. At Rhodes, the fragments of the Colossus were sold by the plunderers to a Jew, who employed nine hundred camels to remove them. The conquerors sailed up the Tiber, pillaged the church of St. Peter, and laid siege to the walls of Rome ; but Leo the Fourth

received them courageously, (A.D. 846—850.) Half of their fleet was scattered by a storm; part of them escaped; others suffered shipwreck; and the rest were taken prisoners. The pope made his victory useful, says one of the liveliest of French writers, in making his captives labour in the fortifications of the city—using for its embellishment the same hands which had been lifted to destroy it.

In the eleventh century, the Moorish power in Spain was broken up by the luxury of the princes, and the ambition of their servants, into more than half a score of separate petty kingdoms; and, four hundred years after, their dominion, with all that it contained of industry, taste, and grandeur, was destroyed, (A.D. 1609.)

Separate kingdoms were, in like manner, formed in Africa—Morocco, Algiers, and Tunis. Many names occur in the history of these countries, which stir up the most brilliant or the most terrific recollections; but, above them all, that of SALADIN recalls the glories of a reign which historians have delighted to celebrate, and of a character which men of all nations, and of every faith, have painted as illustrious for all the virtues that could adorn

a warrior, a prince, and a follower of Mohammed.

The Christian has a standard of character, to which it may be scarcely fair to bring that of Saladin. At the same time, remembering that this is the standard by which we are to judge ourselves, it would be wrong to overlook the necessary deficiencies of Saladin. Great and splendid as his name is, in contrast with the European crusaders, who had little of Christianity beyond the name, the darker features both of his earlier and later years are forgotten in the admiration of monks, who admired his temperance and charity; and of military enthusiasts, who felt his prowess, and his generous treatment of his enemies. It is not impossible to select similar characters from heathens and Mohammedans: it is not either heathenism or Mohammedanism, as such, that produces them; yet such is, often, the weak argument of the enemies of the Christian religion.

The weakness of Saladin's descendants introduced to Egypt twelve thousand slaves, who, under the name of Mamelukes (subjects,) became the masters of the country; till, after a reign of more than two hundred years, they were subdued by Selim the Second, emperor of

Constantinople ; and Egypt became a province of the Ottoman empire.

One of the divisions of the Saracen empire was the khalifate of Bagdad, in which the supreme authority was safely handed down for five hundred years in the family of Abbas, the uncle of Mohammed. For the next three hundred years, this authority was feebly held ; and the miserable princes, at last, gave the reins of government to the emperor of the Moguls and Tartars : though they retained, for three centuries more, a kind of spiritual supremacy, entirely divorced from the temporal power.

The north-east of Asia poured forth its hardy shepherds on the Mohammedan dominions. Their Indian empire was founded by Mahmud, (A.D. 999,) the first that bore the title of Sultan. And it was afterwards conquered by Timour, (A.D. 1399,) also called Tamerlane, which is a corruption of two words ; *timour*, a prince, and *len*, a Persian word for *lame*. Timour was a native of the neighbourhood of Samarcand, the metropolis of the Tartars : with incredible rapidity and energy, he added India, Persia, and great part of Syria, to the empire of his native country ; and he was proceeding to the conquest of China, when he

closed a life of terrible successes, and a reign of barbaric pomp, at the age of seventy.

Timour was one of those extraordinary men, appearing in different countries, at distant intervals, whose genius and ambition fired them with the thought of becoming the conquerors of the world. Having subdued the Getes, or Calmucs, from whom he had received the government of his native province, he gathered round the throne of Samarcand, the hardy Tartars, the Mogul nations of India, and the emirs of Persia and Syria; and he then gave battle to Bajazet, the great sultan and successor of the prophet, whom he conquered and disgraced. While Timour boasted that he was not a man of blood, and had always fought on self-defence, his path could be traced by piles of human skulls. A Moslem-follower of Ali, he decorated his splendid capital of Samarcand with a gorgeous mosque, dedicated to the god of battles; and he dealt out justice through all his provinces, while the kings of many nations trembled before his throne. Filled with the courage which marched straight on towards his object, through whatever obstacles might stand in the way, he rejoiced in the society of poets; and he combined the savage festivities of the

desert with the pomp of luxury, the elegance of art, and the scrupulous formalities of the Mohammedan religion.

The TURKS derive their origin from the elevated plains that lie beyond the north-eastern border of the Caspian Sea. A long line of princes of that race composed what is called the Seljukian dynasties, and is illustrated by the names of TOGROL, the great vicegerent, and son-in-law of Cazem, the khalif of Bagdad ; ALP ARSLAN, or the great lion, who defeated the Greek emperor Diogenes, in the eleventh century ; and MALEK SHA, the greatest prince of his age.

The ancestors of the Ottoman Turks descended, in the middle of the twelfth century, from the north of the Caspian into the Kho-razan ; and, in the fourteenth century, they were blended with the Seljuks of Asia Minor. It was from this united people that Othman arose, the founder of the modern Turkish greatness. Situated on the verge of the Greek empire, his ambition urged him through the passes of Olympus to the invasion of Bithynia ; where, after the victorious incursions of seven-and-twenty years, he established a dominion which was inherited by his son Orchan ; and

transmitted, in a direct line of succession, to Amurath, Bajazet, and Amurath the Second, by whose son, Mohammed the Second, Constantinople was taken, and the eastern Roman empire finally destroyed in 1453.

Mohammed the Second was the second son of Amurath. His mother is said to have been a Christian ; but her son was trained in the rigid doctrines of Islam ; though there were times, in his more advanced years, in which he could speak privately of the Arabian prophet as a robber and impostor. His progress in knowledge, and in the love of the fine arts, which was rapid and extensive, had as little influence as religion on the fury of his passions and the vastness of his ambition. From his earliest manhood, he had set his heart on the possession of Constantinople. In an incredibly short time, he built the fortress of Europa, at Asomaton, five miles from Constantinople ; and the watch-tower of the world, at Adrianople. He studied the newly-discovered art of artillery. On the 6th of April, 1453, he planted his standard before the gate of St. Romanus, and began the siege of Constantinople ; while he covered the Propontis with his fleet. After a tremendous conflict of more than a week, during which

Mohammed declared that he would find "either a throne or a grave under the walls of Constantinople," the conquest was made on the 29th of May. "From the first hour of the memorable twenty-ninth of May, disorder and rapine prevailed in Constantinople till the eighth hour of the same day ; when the sultan himself passed in triumph through the gate of St. Romanus. He was attended by his vizirs, paschâs, and guards, each of whom, says a Byzantine historian, was robust as Hercules, dexterous as Apollo, and equal in battle to any ten of the race of ordinary mortals. The conqueror gazed with satisfaction and wonder on the strange, though splendid, appearance of the domes and palaces, so dissimilar from the style of oriental architecture. In the hippodrome, or *atmeidan*, his eye was attracted by the twisted column of the three serpents ; and, as a trial of his strength, he shattered, with his own mace, or battle-axe, the under jaw of one of these monsters, which, in the eye of the Turks, were the idols, or talismans, of the city. At the principal door of St. Sophia, he alighted from his horse, and entered the dome : and such was his jealous regard for that monument of his glory, that, on observing a Moslem in the act

of breaking the marble pavement, he admonished him with his scimitar, that, if the spoil and captives were granted to the soldiers, the public and private buildings had been reserved for the prince. By his command, the metropolis of the eastern church was transformed into a mosque : the rich and portable instruments of superstition had been removed ; the crosses were thrown down ; and the walls, which were covered with images and mosaics, were washed and purified, and restored to a state of naked simplicity. On the same day, or on the ensuing Friday, the *muezzin*, or crier, ascended the most lofty turret, and proclaimed the *ezan*, or public invitation, in the name of God and his prophets ; the *imam* preached ; and Mohammed the Second performed the *namaz* of prayer and thanksgiving on the great altar, where the Christian mysteries had so lately been celebrated before the last of the Cæsars. From St. Sophia he proceeded to the august, but desolate, mansion of an hundred successors of the great Constantine ; but which, in a few hours, had been stripped of the pomp of royalty. A melancholy reflection on the vicissitudes of human greatness forced itself on his mind ; and he repeated an elegant distich of Persian poetry :-

‘The spider has wove his web in the imperial palace ; and the owl hath sung her watch-song on the towers of Afraisab.’ ”*

The historians of the east narrate the exploits of the successive warriors of the house of Othman, and describe the magnificence of Solyman, the last of their illustrious princes. The Turkish empire has been gradually declining ; and, whatever interpretation may be given to prophecy, all the usual signs of a tottering empire give tokens of its approaching fall. Wherever it exists, the faith of Mohammed is the established religion ; and the Turks are his most zealous followers. They are ever forward to profess it, and to vindicate it. The fountains which surround their mosques, and the baths which abound in all their cities, afford the means of the most punctilious attention to the ablutions which prepare them to recite the prayers five times a day. As soon as the solemn voices of the muezzin are heard from the galleries of the minarets, proclaiming the hour of prayer:—“God is great—God is great—God is great—God is great—there is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet—come to prayer—come to prayer—come to the

* Gibbon’s Roman Empire, chap. 68.

temple of health—great God—great God—there is no God but God:”—the statesman stops his deliberations, and the merchant his trade; every man casts himself on the floor; and every woman covers herself with a veil within her chamber; and each one offers up the appointed prayer. Twice or thrice in a day these prayers are offered in the mosque, which unbelievers are not allowed to enter. On Thursday night, the minaret and the colonnades of the mosques are lighted up: on Friday, at noon, business is suspended, and the public worship is celebrated by repeating after the imam, or minister of religion, certain prayers, with appropriate gestures and prostrations; and by a sermon, which is delivered by the sheikh, or preacher of the mosque. After prayers, the ordinary business or amusement of the day is resumed.

The annual fast of Ramadân, by the defect of the Mohammedan calendar, is observed at different seasons of the year. It is kept with the greatest strictness through the day; when the day is over, the illuminated mosques and bazaars, the crowded streets and coffee-house, the private banquets, and meetings of relatives and friends, make the nights of the month of Ramadân the gayest in the year.

In Arabia, the Bedouins acknowledge no authority either in religion or in government. The men of Mecca and of Medina retain the orthodox, and the borders of the Persian Gulf, the heterodox, doctrines of tradition. In the beginning of the last century, Abd al Wahahab founded a sect of Mohammedans which spread terror over Arabia, Persia, and Egypt, and roused the sultan at Constantinople. Under the guidance of Ebu Saoud and Abd al Aziz—the princes of Nedjed—they declared war against all who departed from the plain meaning of the Korân; and they took possession of Mecca. They were ultimately put down by Mohammed Ali, the pasha of Egypt; though they are still dreaded, rather as robbers than as either a religious or political party. Mohammedanism is the established religion in the empire of Morocco, and in the states of Algiers; Tunis, and Tripoli; and in the interior of the vast continent of Africa it is professed.

In northern Africa, there is a sect of Mohammedans called the Aïsaona, who claim the privilege of being proof against the effects of fire, and the venom of reptiles. The present chief of the sect lives near Medeah in Algeria. The fourth city, in the degrees of Mohammedan

sanctity, is *Kairouan*, thirty-three leagues north-west from Carthage, founded by Okbah, governor of the African provinces in the year 669; the same Okbah who spurred his horse into the waves of the Atlantic, and, raising his eyes to heaven, exclaimed, "Great God! if my course was not stopped by this sea, I would still go on to the unknown kingdoms of the west, preaching the unity of thy holy name, and putting to the sword the rebellious nations who worship any other gods but Thee!" This zealous Mohammedan built the city of *Kairouan*, for the purpose of keeping the surrounding countries in subjection; bordering upon the desert, and twelve leagues from the sea, it was secure from the invasion of the Sicilian and Roman navies; and it became famous for its wealth and its buildings, but more still, for its learning and religion. It is now the second city in the regency of Tunis, and still retains its sacredness, in the eyes of Mohammedans, as the burial-place of Abu Zembat Elbalawy, a favourite disciple of Mohammed. The principal mosque is described as "being of surpassing splendour; the pavement of the most precious marbles, and the walls lined with the same material; hundreds of antique columns, the

spoil alike of heathen temple, Christian church, and Roman palace, support the roof; and fifty enormous lustres, each of a hundred and fifty lights, illuminate the hall, on great anniversaries. The relics preserved here, and which are regarded by all Mohammedans with veneration and awe, are the arms of several of the disciples and companions of the prophet—the conquerors of Africa. Protected by strong gratings, these occupy a shrine, to reach which it is usual to pass between three miraculous pillars, placed near each other, in a triangle. To a true believer, whatever may be his size, the pillars offer no impediment; but, to a man who, either from his want of faith, or from his wicked life, is not looked upon by the prophet with favour, they form an impassable barrier.”*

The Mohammedanism of Persia is of the sect of Ali, or Shiites. The government tolerates the decreasing remains of the ancient fire-worshippers; but the Shiite interpretation of Islamism is rigorously practised throughout the nation.

Tartary is divided among the followers of the Grand Lama of Thibet; the Christians, of the Greek church; the Circassians, and other races,

* Algeria and Tunis in 1845. By Capt. J. Clark Kennedy. 2 vols. vol. ii. p. 131.

that seem to live without any religion; and the Mohammedans, who occupy the extensive country that stretches from the Caspian to the mountains of Beluc, and from the mountains of Gaur, beyond the desert of Issim, to the Russian frontier, not less than fifteen hundred miles long, and more than eight hundred miles in breadth.—In China, Mohammedanism is tolerated and professed.

In Hindostan, the Mohammedans have generally been princes and ministers of state, who are Sonnites; and the emigrants from Persia, who are Shiites; besides these, there are numerous converts from Hindooism; while, in the Punjâb, the Sikhs preserve a mixture of the two religions. The number of Mohammedans in India has been reckoned at from ten to fifteen millions. They abound, also, in numbers which we have no means of estimating, throughout the great islands of the east.

The gathering of pilgrims at Mecca, is decreasing every year. But women, and men of rank and office, perform their journey by proxy. The public ways, ships, and guards, are provided by Mohammedan princes; and the Tartar still meets the Negro; the Circassian, the Persian, and the Indian, still join the pilgrims from

Barbary and Morocco; carrying back with them to their respective nations, the shawls of Cashmere, or the muslins of Bengal, the pearls of Kilhan, the cinnamons of Ceylon, or the diamonds of Golconda.

The Mohammedans, especially the Turks, are gradually relaxing in their abstinence from wine; and brandy is not forbidden. Many of the vineyards of Greece belong to Turks: though the wine is made by the unbeliever.

The common luxury for intoxication with the Turk, is opium; and chess is his favourite amusement; but all gaming is unlawful.

The Mohammedans of the present day, by a "refinement of uncharitableness," are little anxious for the conversion of the world. They tolerate Christians, and even protect them, though they make them pay for it by doubling their taxes. Hatred of Jews and Christians is rooted in their hearts from childhood. In the cities, the erection of new churches for Christians is forbidden, and heavy fines are paid for repairing those which are old; in villages this restriction is removed. They never greet the Christian with the "salaam;" and they seldom omit to season their most courteous salutations,

with the contemptuous addition of "infidel," or "dog."

From these expressions of intolerance, the Maronites, a sect of Christians who were persecuted by the Greek church, are exempted. They occupy the country sloping from the ridge of Mount Libanus to the shores of Tripoli. They are allowed to celebrate, without restraint, all the ceremonies of their religion: each village being adorned with its own chapel, and each chapel surmounted with its own bell, a sound hateful to the Moslem. Their nine bishops, one hundred and fifty priests, and one hundred and twenty thousand lay members, make a nominal acknowledgment of the pope's supremacy; yet they are allowed by their Turkish rulers to wear the green turban, which, except in their territories, would cost a Christian his life.

It would be unjust to pass over the hospitality and beneficence of the Turkish nation, and of the Arabs. The precepts of the Korân on this subject are described by oriental travellers as honourably observed. The traveller is provided for; the stranger is protected. The feelings of compassion are extended to the lower animals; hunting is abhorred; and birds are seldom

robbed of their liberty. In ordinary life, though the law permits polygamy, a man is usually the husband of one wife : the notions and manners of the Turks being unfavourable to either conjugal infidelity or divorce ; though among them, as in countries where other religions are professed, there is much profligacy among the rich, and immorality of various kinds among the poor.

This view of the Mohammedan religion shall close with an account of their ecclesiastical government.

The Grand Sultan is the "defender of the faith," "*The Shadow of God*." His various powers are administered by a body of learned men called dulema, consisting of imams, or ministers of religion, muftis, or expounders of the law, and kadies, or ministers of justice. These officers are free from taxes and from arbitrary confiscations. The power of the priesthood is very slight. Their presence is not necessary to any religious practice. They have no distinguishing dress or habits of life. They have nothing to do, officially, with the instruction of the people, or with the direction of the conscience. They are appointed by the founders of the mosque, in which they chant the

public services, subject to the approval of a mufti in Constantinople, or of the pasha, in any of the provinces.

Mohammedanism has its enthusiasts, marked by various degrees of departure from the established religion, divided into more than thirty sects. Under the name of Fakeers, or Dervises, they impress the people with a notion of their peculiar sanctity, by their bodily mortifications, by their strange incantations, by their violent dances, and by their repetition of the sacred name, for hours or days without ceasing.

The Sooffees of Persia maintain opinions like those which ancient sages of Greece are said to have borrowed from the east, and which are not far from those of some philosophers in modern times, who have treated the belief in matter as a delusion. It is the extravagance of poetry carried into practice and shaped into visionary doctrines, flattering to the intellect and enchanting the imagination, but dangerous in their influence on the passions, and in their effects on actual life.

Though we have had no wish to give too dark a picture of Mohammed, or of his religion, we should betray truth under the appearance of candour, if we failed to mark, somewhat dis-

tinctly, the deficiencies and vices of the system. We have seen that it labours under the grand disadvantages of being wanting in evidence, so that it has no just pretensions to truth; of presenting no sacrifice for the taking away of sin, so that it cannot meet the call of one who feels, as all men ought to feel before God; and of having in it no power—such as that of the Holy Spirit, to renew the heart of man. What we have now to notice more particularly is the moral system of Mohammedanism, as unfolded in the Korân, and displayed in the character of Mohammed, from which the Korân was drawn; and from the lives of his disciples, which were regulated by those precepts, as explained by that example.

The fundamental *ideas* of all religion—the attributes of God—were perverted to suit the convenience, to gratify the whim, to serve the lusts, and to sanction the crimes, of the impostor. Human frailties, fickleness of purpose, grossness of thought, degrading occupations, the regulation of vice, and the protection of the most disgusting wickedness, are ascribed, with the most hardened and impudent blasphemy, to the holy and infinite Object of our worship.

Not less impiously is the doctrine of Pro-

vidence caricatured and dishonoured. By a ridiculous contrivance of celestial machinery, a system of gloomy spies is made to fill the spiritual world; the most grotesque miracles are gravely recorded, and as gravely believed. The facts of Scripture are misunderstood, mixed with the fiction of the Talmud, and travestied. God sent a raven to instruct Cain how to hide the shame of his brother; the Israelites, for eating fish on the sabbath, are changed into *apes*; Abraham is delivered up to the infidels, and flung upon a burning pile; but God is represented as saying, "Fire! be thou cooled," and the patriarch escapes; the hand of David tires upon the harp-strings, but the mountains and the birds take up the hymn; a counterfeit body of Solomon is placed upon his throne, the winds run at his command, the devils are delivered to him, in chains, to build his pavilions and to bring him treasures from the deep!

Instead of presenting before his followers an all-wise Ruler, Mohammed taught the Arabians a "series of interpositions, in motive partial, in design cruel, in operation unjust. Man was divided, by the express declaration of Heaven, (as was pretended) into two classes: the one

consisting of a few petty tribes, to be sustained and exalted by the favour, the other, including the great mass of human existence, to be devoted and cast down by the reprobation, of the Almighty. It was not the multitudes of the isles, it was Mecca and her prophet, that were to rejoice because the Lord was king. The whole system was that of a monarch who opens the sanctuary of his palace to an ambitious favourite, and crushes his realms with a rod of iron.—But, if the system was partial and cruel in principle, it was bitter and destructive in its effects. The brotherhood of man was to emerge under its influence in the brotherhood of a sanguinary sect; and the pride and selfishness of the adventurous Arab were to deal out authenticated violence to the rejected world. Piety was to be measured by slaughter; glory and immortality to be won by blood; and the true believer, inspired with zeal to bleed or perish in the defence or propagation of his faith, was to demonstrate his holiness by the consecrated virtues of the persecutor, and the pious intolerance of the fanatic. Those tenets became a legacy of woe and desolation to future times. From the era of the Hegira, through a long series of melancholy ages, a

great portion of the world was to be converted into a region of woe and havoc. The stream of blood which began to flow when Mohammed first unsheathed his heaven-directed sword, was to be swelled by the active zeal of the khalifs, till it spread, in a frightful inundation, over the fairest realms of the east and the west. Nation after nation was thus subdued or depopulated under the reputed sanction of Divine authority. Alleged idolatry, or disbelief, afforded a sufficient justification of the pious fury of the triumphant sect ; and the trump of reprobation once sounded, the devastation and slaughter, through which the Moslems were to advance to a ferocious despotism, were considered as congenial with the designs of Providence, and as worthy of the glory of this world, and the felicity of the next.

“ It will not be easy to point out in any other religion, perversion so gross, or impiety so presumptuous. The absurdities of polytheism are purity and wisdom, compared with this providence of the Korân, and with these holy lessons of religious extermination. We contemplate with a smile, Vishnu veiling his glories in a ludicrous metamorphosis, or a Jupiter chastising the insolence of his sister and his

wife. But we behold with different emotions the ruling deity of Islam; and we know not how, sufficiently, to reprobate the religion which, opening in one page inspiring views of the Divine nature and economy, exhibits, in another, the most offensive representations of both; which describes the Almighty as alternately regulating the universe with omniscient wisdom, and co-operating with the execrable ambition and sensuality of an impostor; which, sometimes addressing itself to the Divinity as the source of all good, pretends, more frequently, to derive from His word an authority and sanction, not merely for individual crime, but for the fearful fanaticism which was to continue for centuries to vex and turmoil the earth.”*

The fanaticism which prompted such unworthy views of God, and of his providence, breathed its malignant air through all the forms and rites of Mohammedan devotion. All that was dear to the idolatrous Arab, by usage and tradition, was retained. The place, the hour, the gesture, the words, the tone of prayer, were all prescribed by a despot, who pretended to have received them in messages from heaven.

* *Vindiciæ Christianæ*, by the Rev. J. B. Alley, LL.B.

Whatever was added to the original Arabian superstitions from the Jews or Christians, was *fitted in* to the old system, with but little regard for consistency, and with no tendency to the encouragement of spiritual worship. Fasts and pilgrimages, with the formal repetitions of words, made up nearly the whole Mohammedan religion; and the performance of these idle and wearisome ceremonies fill a large portion of a man's life.

As there was so little to be taught, and the little that was taught required the most servile credulity, the priests of Islam are more concerned in watching fountains, repeating forms, and denouncing infidels, than in the instruction of the people. The whole scheme being designed to raise a nation of warriors for the conquest of all other nations, it is utterly defective in the softer and calmer virtues—humility, forbearance, meekness, forgiveness, the love of peace, the sympathy and tenderness, the benignity and purity,—by which the Divine religion of the Son of God has won its brightest victories. There was little to edify, nothing to console, the poor—if they were not warriors.

The female sex are degraded by Moham-

medanism. While young, girls are restrained by the iron hand of their fathers; and, by early marriage, they become their husbands' slaves. A husband may add his female captives to the number of his wives, whom he may repudiate or exchange at pleasure. The Korân is silent on the future felicity of women; and the disputes on that subject among Mohammedans are themselves a sufficient condemnation of their religion.

In such a state of society, there is no *home*, no refinement, no true dignity, no pure enjoyment. The Mohammedan doctrines of the future state exhibit the romance of a sensual imagination, instead of a clear anticipation of truth, and the warm hopes of a heart which is to be prepared for purity and everlasting gladness: there is nothing spiritual, nothing to elevate the character, nothing to soothe the fainting soul of man, weary of the vanities and sins of earth; while there is everything to stimulate those fierce passions which fill the world with guilt and misery.

CHAPTER VI.

SUCCESS OF MOHAMMED ACCOUNTED FOR.

THE spread of a religion through so large a part of the world is a fact, a series of facts, worthy of attention; and it is an interesting question, not without most important bearings—How did it come to pass that this religion which Christians and infidels agree in denouncing as *false in all its peculiarities*, should have gained belief at first; should have spread with such speed and force throughout the world; should retain so strong a hold on the minds and habits of the nations that have embraced it; and should have continued for so many ages?

There would be no difficulty whatever in this question if men did not come to it, misled by two mistakes. One mistake—arising from a narrow view and a presumptuous judgment on the ways of providence—consists in the opinion that the God of truth would not allow a system

of falsehood to gain possession of the belief of mankind. The second mistake—another form indeed, of the first, arising from a bigoted attachment of men to their own modes of religion—interprets the fact of outward success, as a token of the approbation of God, and as a *mark of a true church*. On every showing it can be proved that both these opinions are mistakes: the history of Mohammedanism is itself a proof that they are.

To a Mohammedan, or to a disbeliever of the gospel, holding up the success of that religion as a reason for looking at the gospel with distrust, we would say—If you think that God would certainly interfere to prevent the spread of falsehood, how do you account for the spread of polytheism or idolatry, of Hindooism, of Buddhism, of Christianity? All these religions cannot be true; for some of them contradict and denounce the others. Here is the plain fact—that false religions have arisen, have spread, and have fastened themselves in the strong belief of many millions of the human race.

To the Roman Catholic, we would simply repeat the question; only, instead of Christianity, we would say Islamism; and the heresies that have prevailed in every age of the church,

especially the heresy, as he says it is, of Protestantism, which, if a heresy, or whether a heresy or not, rose in an age of intellectual light, and spiritual revival, and has been professed for three hundred years by the most thoughtful, the most energetic, and the most virtuous race of men that have yet appeared on earth.

To the Protestant we would repeat the question; only substituting for Christianity what he calls Popery, and which, just as long a time as Islamism, has been “practising and prospering” in the earth; and which is putting forth its power at this day, with an energy for which the Protestant churches have not been prepared.—It will not do to shut our eyes to facts which fill the broad field, and the open high roads, of the universal history of man. With these facts before him, who will calmly and reasonably say—that God would prevent by means which we see have not been used, or, if used, have failed, the spreading of religious delusion through the world?

And who, with all these facts, seriously weighed and compared, will either profess it as his own belief, or respect it as another man’s belief, that visible success is a mark of the true church?

The scheme of Providence is too wide and too high for us to comprehend; and it cannot be either wise or pious to entertain opinions which the plainest facts oppose. The signs of a true church must be sought in the truth of her doctrines, and in the piety of her character: not in marks which she may have in common with manifest error, and with acknowledged wickedness.

Laying aside these mistakes, let us look attentively at the history which has passed before us.

1. Let us look at *the character of the Arabs in connexion with religion*. They were fickle; they were divided; they were a mixture of idolaters, of sceptics, of Jews, and of men professing a corruption of the Christian faith.

Is it so marvellous a thing, that a bold and accomplished reformer, believed to be a wise and holy man, should awaken a few of all these sorts of men to see the errors that prevailed around them, and to receive a system of doctrine which each man saw to be opposed to his neighbour's error, while it retained the substance of his own belief? It was not the habit of the Arabian mind to be led by evidence and the love of truth; but, rather by their

imaginations, and by the enthusiasm of their feelings. Why should we wonder that appeals to their imaginations, and to their enthusiastic impulses, should be successful?

2. Let us look at *the situation and the qualities of Mohammed*. His family had been, for several generations, entrusted with the care of religion in his native city. Nothing was more natural than the expectation that a reform of abuses, and a return to the great truth—that there is one God—which he could prove to have been the faith of their ancestors, should receive some degree of attention, and, in time, of favour.

3. Let us look at *the end which Mohammed placed before him*. No careful reader of the Korân, or of the life of Mohammed, can doubt that his end was—the establishment of a universal monarchy. To this, every doctrine, every institution, and every measure, directly tended. Seeing what important effects the different religions of men had upon their social character, his sagacity perceived that, if he could raise an army under the sanction of a pretended revelation, and stir the martial ardour of his followers by the zeal of religion, and by the sure hope of happiness hereafter as well

as by conquest here, there was nothing to obscure his prospect of the subjugation of the world. What his sagacity suggested, his ambition grasped at, as the object of his life ; and to this object his own fanaticism, and that of his followers, was devoted with the most burning earnestness.

4. Let us look at *the means chosen by Mohammed for gaining attention and securing success*. He borrowed truth from the ancient belief of his country ; he praised the devotional spirit of his fellow-citizens ; he maintained their reverence for their temple, and the mysterious “black stone ;” he offered to bring all the tribes of Arabia, and the men of other nations, in pilgrimage to Mecca. With the Jews he acknowledged the Divine authority of Moses ; and with the Christian, the Divine authority of Moses, and of Jesus ; and he held himself forth as the prophet foretold by the Hebrew lawgiver, and the paraclete promised by Jesus Christ. He appealed for the truth of his own pretensions to the Korân, with which the poets of his country confessed that they had nothing worthy to be compared. He secretly persuaded first his wife, then his servant, then his cousin—a fiery youth of sixteen—to em-

brace his mission; and, after these, Abu-Beker, who influenced ten other men of rank and influence. He secured the protection of his uncle; and the influence arising from the wealth he acquired by marriage. He laboured, silently, for years in the preparation of his message. He preached to the pilgrims at the Kaaba. When he lost his protector, by the death of Abu-Taleb, he betook himself to flight. Before his flight, he was tolerant in his doctrines; gentle in his demeanour; the unresisting sufferer of persecution; and, so long as he confined himself to mere persuasion, he made, out of his own family, eleven proselytes in three years; and about a hundred in seven years. When he escaped to Medina, he revealed his purpose to place himself at the head of armed followers, to put an end to the hostilities of the contending tribes; he gained renown for valour by the success of his arms, and gratified his followers by the distribution of the plunder; he raised armies; he forbade the use of wine when he had military authority to enforce his command to a people whose desire for wine had been always moderate, and to whom its use never had been habitual; he indulged his followers in another passion to which

they were strongly addicted ; he painted the miseries of the unbelieving with incessant earnestness, and in most terrific images ; he promised robes of silk, marble palaces, groves and fountains, and beautiful virgins to those who fought for the faith ; he taught the fatal necessity of all that comes to pass. At the head of armies, so gathered and so instructed, he became a conqueror ; offering to his enemies the alternative, “ the Korân, the tribute, or the sword.” But for the victories of his sword, there is no reason to believe that he would ever have been heard of beyond his own country.

5. The success of his followers is easily explained, if we consider, on the one hand, *the weakness of the great empires*, by which alone they could then have been resisted ; and, on the other hand, *the wild valour, the vindictive temper, and the burning fanaticism* with which these soldiers from the desert rushed on the decrepit governments, and the corrupted churches, of their times. When the invasions of the Huns, and of the Goths, are remembered—and the conquests of more ancient times—we may be dazzled by the rapidity of the Saracen victories ; yet we see nothing in them but the natural effects of military genius

and courage, inflamed by zeal for a religion which assured the soldier of victory now, and of paradise hereafter.—The permanence of this religion is now apparently secured by education ; fortified by prejudice ; and maintained by the authority and interest of political power, in regions where freedom of thought, respecting either religion or government, is unknown.

It is difficult to make a fair comparison of Mohammed with Jesus Christ.

Even if religious reverence towards “ the Son of God ” did not restrain us, how can we compare the licentious polygamist, the robber, the fiery warrior, the inexorable bigot, with the benevolent and majestic “ Son of Man ? ”

The contrast in some of its stronger features is obvious enough. Jesus lived and died in Judæa : Mohammed had travelled and mingled with men of various nations, and of conflicting religions. Mohammed was a leader of Arabian plunderers : Jesus went about doing good. Mohammed became a warrior at the head of armies : Jesus was “ the Prince of peace.” Mohammed was a man of unbounded sensuality : Jesus was “ holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” Mohammed was ambitious : Jesus was “ meek and lowly in

heart." Mohammed rested his claims on secret revelations: Jesus did "the works which none other man did," healing the sick, and raising the dead. Mohammed called his followers to blood and conquest: Jesus summoned his disciples to repentance, humility, and love. Mohammed escaped from his enemies by flight: Jesus, by a miracle, in open day. Mohammed taught a religion which contradicts itself: Jesus was always the same. Mohammed was a destroyer: Jesus is THE SAVIOUR.

"Here, the comparison must cease. The events that followed in our Saviour's life are too august to be placed in competition with any mortal power, and can be comprehended only by minds habituated to the contemplation of heavenly objects. Let us consider the passion of our Lord, and the magnificent scenes of his resurrection and ascension; and then ask, in what part of all the history of Mohammedanism any parallel or resemblance can be found? Let us consider the last days of Christ's continuance upon earth, and how does the prophet of Mecca sink in the comparison! Let us, in imagination, hear and see the blessed Jesus when he gives his apostles

authority to go forth and baptize all nations, and preach in his name repentance and remission of sins ; when he empowers them to cast out evil spirits, to speak with new tongues, and to work wonders ; when he holds up to them the promise of THE COMFORTER, and power from on high ; and when, having blessed them, he ascends into heaven, where he is for ever seated in glory at the right hand of God.

“ But, chiefly, what raises Christ and his religion far above all the fictions of Mohammed, is that awful alternative of hopes and fears, that looking for of judgment, which our Christian faith sets before us.

“ At that day, when Time, the great Arbiter of truth and falsehood, shall bring to pass the accomplishment of the ages, and the Son of God shall make his enemies his footstool, then shall the deluded followers of the great impostor, disappointed of the expected intercession of their prophet, stand trembling and dismayed at the approach of the glorified Messiah.

“ Then shall they say, ‘ Yonder cometh in the clouds that Jesus, whose religion we laboured to destroy, whose temples we profaned, whose servants and followers we cruelly oppressed ! Behold he cometh ; but no longer

the humble son of Mary, no longer a mere mortal prophet, the equal of Abraham and of Moses, as that deceiver taught us, but the everlasting Son of the everlasting Father ! The Judge of mankind ! The Sovereign of angels ! The Lord of all things, both in earth and heaven ! ” *

Nor can a fair comparison be easily made between Islamism and the Christian religion, either in the proofs offered, in the principles taught, or in the characters formed.

The one, as we have seen, appeals to the imagination and the passions :—the other appeals to miracles attested ; to prophecies fulfilled ; and to holy principles, embodied in the lives of its disciples. The one contains the great doctrine of the Divine unity :—the other unfolds that doctrine in its vast consequences, and in its most sublime connexions, revealing the Son and the Holy Ghost as one with the eternal Father, in the mystery of God. The one makes a merit of forms and fasting, and almsgiving, and fighting for religion :—the other reveals to man’s conscience his true character, and leads him to peace and holiness by induc-

* White’s Bampton Lectures, serm. v.

ing him to receive salvation as the gift of the grace of God, through faith in the sacrifice of the cross. The one cherishes the most violent passions, opening wide the sources of nearly all the miseries of man:—the other teaches self-denial, chastity, and mercy: it does more than inculcate them; it secures them, by a power that works within. The one has vainly promised joys to which only the sensual and the savage have aspired:—the other employs the sweetest and most touching images, to console the weak, the tempted, and the dying, by the assurance of a present Comforter, and by the prospect of an inheritance into which there shall in no wise “enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.”

CHAPTER VII.

INFLUENCE OF MOHAMMEDANISM.

THE Mohammedan religion, like every other, produces the legitimate effects of its principles on those who embrace it. As compared with the idolatries of Arabia, or of any other country, the popular belief of one God—a *real Being, not a philosophical abstraction*, must have a good influence, so far as it goes, and in proportion as correct ideas of God are taught. The certain expectation of a future state of rewards and punishments, too, is a great improvement on the vague notions of even the wisest of Grecian or Roman sages; and still more, on the thoughtlessness respecting the future state which marks the loose ideas of the irreligious vulgar, in all nations.

But, keeping in view what Mohammed taught and what his followers believe, we can trace the actual effect of this religion on the

intellect, on the *character*, and on the *happiness* of the people.

The effects on the *intellect*, though modified by the circumstances of countries and ages, differing from each other, may briefly be stated, as checking invention, repressing inquiry, crushing freedom, discouraging reason, and preventing knowledge and improvement. It is true that the Mohammedans of Bagdad invited the Muses from Greece : that the rough Moors were softened by the philosophy that filled their numerous libraries in Spain : that the translations of Greek philosophers introduced among the Saracens, a taste for medicine and botany, for chemistry, astronomy, and logic, and made them the means of transmitting ancient learning to the modern Italians, and the rest of Europe. But these improvements arose from causes working in the countries which they conquered, and were in no degree encouraged by their religion. They were strangers to those noble compositions which breathe the spirit of ancient freedom. They had no liberal intercourse with enlightened nations. They had scarcely any intellectual boldness, and but little of the spirit of discovery. The idea of mental advancement was

discouraged. The imagination was the slave of sensual appetites, and the higher faculties were controlled by the imagination. A hard and gloomy fatalism was like a network of lead on the whole mind. In the times nearest to Mohammed, the knowledge of the conquered nations was held in as much contempt as their religion. The modern Turks are, generally, ignorant of geography. They know the instruments of modern science only as childish toys. Even the compass is but partially employed. To this day, the grand sultan is said to consult the stars with all the anxiety and foolish ceremonies of a superstition which, in other countries, has faded before the light of knowledge. At Constantinople, a university is now in progress: and there is a mechanics' institution begun by some Englishmen, and patronized by the sultan; June, 1847. Their poetry is borrowed from the Arabs and Persians. Painting is in the rudest state. Sculpture they have none. Music, beyond the simplest melody, is nearly unknown. Though not without the printing press, it is little used.—All this inferiority of intellectual activity, whatever other circumstances may concur either to lessen or to

increase it, is caused, mainly, by their religion: which we may therefore pronounce to be injurious to the intellectual character of man.

No system of belief has come up to that of Mohammed in arrogance and ferocity. With such principles, justice, humanity, mercy, the most solid foundations and the most graceful ornaments of human intercourse were not likely to be cherished, and they have not been cherished; though the Korân recommends them in words, and though the affections and the wants of men have always made it impossible for them to live in families or in societies entirely without them. The Mohammedan is bound by his religion to act with injustice, with hatred, and with unrelenting cruelty, towards those who differ from him in their faith. Since the best religion is but imperfectly exemplified in its sincerest followers, by reason of the weakness and the sinfulness of human nature, what must that religion be, which, instead of condemning and controlling, stimulates the basest passions, by the authority of a command, and by the prospect of a reward?

We need be at no loss in saying what must be the effects of such a religion on human *happiness*. The fatalism which it inculcates,

the slavish submission to tyranny which it enjoins, the fasts and burdensome rites which it substitutes for humble yet free and cheerful worship, and the degrading misery it would inflict by requiring men from every nation to brave the terrors of the ocean, and the desert, to pay their foolish homage to the black stone at Mecca:—these are most serious checks on all that is worth the name of happiness. But if we would see what a scourge this religion is, we must review the ravages of war, the tortures of men, women, and children, the distress, plunder, and bloodshed, which its direct influence has provoked.

The brief sketch of one of the most distinguished followers of Mohammed will give the plainest illustration of this truth.

Khaled, son of Al-Walid, first appears on the scene as a leader of the Arabian idolaters at the battle of Ohod. In the eighth year of the Hegira he joined the standard of the prophet, and received from him the title "Sword of God." Even Mohammed, however, was shocked and grieved by the brutal cruelties of his follower; and both Abu-Beker and Omar had occasion to reprove him for the fierceness of his zeal. After giving signal proofs of his courage and enterprise in

Irak, he was appointed general of the Saracen forces in Syria. At the battle of Botzra his men "fought like lions," while he cried out, "Fight, fight ! Paradise ! par  dise !" At the siege of Damascus, Derar, a companion in war, was urging Khaled to rest himself after a hard fight with "a Christian dog." "O Derar," replied Khaled, "we shall rest in the world to come ; he that labours to-day shall rest to-morrow;" then, placing his prisoner in safety, and changing his horse, he rode onward to the battle. For his vehemence in pursuing the Damascenes into an enemy's territories, Omar superseded him, by appointing Abu-Obeidah to be khalif of Syria, after Abu-Beker's death ; but such was the confidence of the soldiers in Khaled that, at the battle of Yermouk, they demanded of the khalif that the disbanded warrior should lead them on to victory. Six years after that victory, he died ; whether at Medina, or at Emesa, in Syria, is not known.—Before his death, Omar had made, or encouraged, a charge against him of robbing the public treasury. The suspicion rested, faintly, on the fact that Khaled had paid a hundred thousand dirrhews (three thousand pounds, equal to thirty thousand at the present

day) as the dower of his wife, and, partly, on his having given ten thousand dirrhews to Assauth the poet for celebrating his glory in the following lines :

“Thy irresistible valour hath hushed the raging tempest,
In battle thou hast been armed with the tusks of the
elephant, and the jaws of the alligator ;
Thy mace hath hurled the terrors of the day of judgment
Through the Roman provinces ;
And the lightning of thy scimitar
Hath spread wretchedness and mourning among
The cities of the Franks.”

Khaled was seized—his turban fastened round his neck—and fined ; but his horse, his armour, and one slave, were his whole property. Omar wept over his tomb.*—Khaled was a thorough-going Mohammedan : and it was his glory that he “spread wretchedness and mourning among the cities of the Franks !”

We know not the name of a man who has been so great a curse to the human race as Mohammed.

* Major David Price's *Memoirs of the Principal Events of Mohammedan History*. Vol. i. chap. 3.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROSPECTS OF MOHAMMEDANISM.

WITHOUT venturing on the troubled waters of political speculation, or pretending to raise the veil of prophecy, we may close the life of Mohammed by pointing out, so far as we are competent to judge, the probable end of the system which has been described.

Mohammedans themselves can scarcely imagine that the system is to last through all ages, or that it is to fill the world. Whatever they might imagine, we see in it the seeds of destruction. We behold it losing the external force which raised it. We are familiar with causes of various kinds which seem to insure the fall of every prop on which it can lean. The doctrines of the Korân are partly true, partly false. The true doctrines are borrowed, directly or indirectly, from the Scriptures; but they are robbed of those references to the Saviour,

which gave them their charm, and their power. The false doctrines are either foolish or hurtful; and, being so, they must give way before advancing knowledge and experience. To some extent—to the full extent, indeed, in which freedom of thought has been secured by other causes—they have given way already.

The spirit of the Korân is a spirit of proud contempt for other nations.—And there was not a little in the character and condition of other nations, at the time when the Korân was composed, to excuse, if it could not justify, that spirit. Look, for example, at the state of Persia, as it would be viewed by an enthusiastical and martial reformer in Arabia. While Mohammed was but a youth, Persia had been the scene of dark and tragical revolutions which brought her into proposed alliance with the successors of Constantine. The monarch, Chosroes the Second, had been excluded from his throne and kingdom by a usurper, and restored to it by a rival; yet, by the successor of that rival, his army was vanquished, near the ruins of the ancient Nineveh; and himself, after an ignominious flight from his Assyrian palaces, thrown by his own subjects, and, it has been supposed, by his own son,

into a dungeon, where he died ; leaving the fragments of a broken kingdom to the conquest of the Arabian khalifs.

Then, look again, at the condition of the Roman emperor in the east.—For two centuries, the emperors had wasted away a life of easy luxury in the palace of Constantinople. At length, Maurice, who had received the imperial diadem from the dying hand of Tiberius, the successor of Justini, having insured the alliance with Persia by restoring Chosroes to his throne, sought in vain to revive the martial spirit of the men who boasted that they were Romans. But his armies provoked his capital to rebellion. Maurice was forced to resign the purple to Phocas. His five sons were murdered before his eyes, and then he was murdered himself. To the reign of Phocas, which “afflicted Europe with ignominious peace, and Asia with desolating war,” for eight years, a violent end was put by Heraclius, the exarch of Africa. Heraclius himself beheld the empire rifled of its glories: Antioch, Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia, Damascus, Jerusalem, Pelusium, Alexandria, Chalcedon, Pontius, Ancyra, Rhodes, all were wrested from his grasp by the Persian conqueror. The

Scythian Avars, coming from the north of Europe, plundered the suburbs of his capital, while celebrating the festivals of a treacherous peace. He was reduced to the humiliation of paying an annual tribute to the Persian monarch.

In the midst of these difficulties, Heraclius started forth in the spirit, and on the track, of Alexander the Great. Borrowing the treasures of the church, he raised an army, equipped a fleet, and encamped near Issus, where Alexander had gained his celebrated victory over Darius. Emulating both the Greek and the Roman conquerors of ancient story, he pierced the very heart of Persia, quenched their sacred fire, and razed the temples of the Magi to the ground.—In his absence the Avars were driven from the walls of Constantinople. On the return of Heraclius from his dazzling victories in the east, he performed a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and restored, as was believed, the true cross to the holy sepulchre. But the spoils of Persia were consumed in the expenses of the war, or lost in the storms of the Euxine. Two hundred thousand of his soldiers had fallen by the sword. The population of his dominions was

drained. Arts declined, and agriculture failed. Before he died, the Arabians garnered, in the name of Mohammed and the Korân, the harvests which the sword of Heraclius had gathered in the Persian provinces.

Once more, look at the condition of what history calls the Christian church. A few years before the birth of Mohammed, the emperor Justinian had ended his long reign at the age of eighty-three. He had rejoiced in the title of Justinian the Pious. To the assiduity of a student, and the austerity of a monk, he joined the superstition of a devotee, the eagerness of a theological disputant, and the bitterness of an imperial persecutor. The heretics and pagans, the Jews and the Samaritans, were, alike, the victims of his zeal. He was himself admonished in his old age, as a heretic, by a bishop of the western church.

Heraclius, who imbibed much of the spirit of Justinian, entertained one of Mohammed's ambassadors. Heraclius was then returning from his victories in Persia; and he is represented, both by Mohammedan and by Christian writers, as very friendly to the soldier-prophet. —The state of Christians, so called, was well known to Mohammed. Their discords, their

persecuting spirit, their superstitions, and their political weaknesses, were not likely to excite his admiration.

With these views of the surrounding nations, it was not surprising that the conquering Arabs should, in their pride, regard the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and all Christians with imperious scorn.

But when other nations, professing another faith, shall be seen by the Mohammedans to be superior to themselves in those qualities on which they have placed the highest value, and superior, to a still greater degree, in other qualities which are immeasurably higher—then, contempt will give way to respect; and, however unwillingly at first, their eyes must open on the falsehood and the wickedness which they have been taught, by their fathers, to mistake for religion. The continuance of that religion for twelve hundred years, or for twelve thousand years, could not prove that what is false was ever true; that what is foolish was ever wise; that what is evil was ever good. The sharpness of Mohammed's scimitar cannot answer for the reality of Mohammed's dreams; nor can the valour of his successors show that he was

right in teaching one man to hate another. The mind of an Arab, of a Tartar, of a Persian, of a Hindoo, or of a Turk, is not incapable of seeing this. Individuals among them *have* seen it. God may yet show his people a "better way" of enlightening Mohammedans, than our politicians have sanctioned, or our philosophers invented, or our missionaries, as yet, had opportunity to use.

It does not follow, because this method has been so long delayed, that it will never reach them, any more than it followed, because the nations of the east had yielded to the Turks, that the Germans could not drive them from the west. Let Mohammedans be humbled by the peaceful power of Christians, instructed by the wisdom, relieved by the mercy, and won by the grace of Jesus, and by the examples of his true disciples: they will then know that the Christian religion is not the idolatrous, enfeebling, and cruel system which they have imagined it to be. When they are in a condition to think, thus far, favourably of a religion which, for twelve hundred years past, has been the object of their dark and bitter scorn, the strongest link of the chain that has bound them in their

superstition falls from their spirits; and, from that hour forward, they are free to doubt, to inquire, to examine, and to believe. We know that their religion is a superstition. We know that it dishonours God, and makes man a tyrant or a slave. We know that it will not bear the light. We know that when all that we mean by light—truth, freedom, goodness, happiness—shines upon the votaries of Islam, they will arise, and shake it from them like a poisonous serpent. It is according to human nature, and human experience, so to think. We cannot be insensible to the inherent weakness of the Mohammedan empire; and the consequent weakness of the Mohammedan religion. It is rather a relic of the times that have been, than a living power of the times that are: having lost the freshness of its youth, and the calm power of its manhood, it, everywhere, betrays the weakness of old age. How slight its power in Arabia! How subdued in India! How relaxed in Persia! How tottering at Constantinople! The days are gone, when it was the nurse of conquerors!

It is not unsuitable to mention a familiar tradition of long standing among the Moham-

medans themselves. They believe that their empire is to be destroyed by a race of light-haired warriors from the north. They think their doom is "written on their forehead." They resign themselves to what they look upon as a decree, which it would be as impious as it is impossible to resist.

That Mohammedanism arose by the sword would seem to indicate that by the sword it is to perish. We are not sure that it may not perish without the sword: if the sword, which was once drawn for its defence, is left to slumber in its scabbard; and there it has been slumbering long. Controlled under British authority in the east, and watched by all Europe in the west, Islam is like the lion, brought from the Arabian desert, in the keeper's den; or like the eagle, from the rocky mountains of Petræa—his plumage faded—his wing broken, pining in his cage. All the powers now active in the world forbid the hope, or the fear, that scenes like those of former centuries should be repeated; and, if they are not repeated, the history of Mohammedanism points out its end, not less clearly than it has shown its beginning. The discoveries of science are against it. The inventions of art are against it.

The improvements in government are against it. The whole progress of nations is against it. Above all, the truth of the Christian religion is against it. The spelling-book, the magnet, the telescope, the printing-press, THE BIBLE—now freely circulated in the languages of the east—are all against it. These weapons cut deeper than the sword; reach further than the cannon; and, whatever errors we may make in calculating “times and seasons,” here are elements of power which neither the religion nor the empire of Mohammed can finally resist.

The improvements which have been going on in the world are not unaccompanied by similar improvements in many portions of the church. Large numbers of Christians have been led, by the Holy Spirit, we believe, to take a practical view of their relation to the world. There might be more union: would that there were! But the path of pure Christianity is opening, by the work of Providence, for great changes in the east; and we may hope that the disciples of Jesus Christ are undergoing a preparation for a great work among the people of those regions. Great as the prejudices of Mohammedans are, and hopeless, almost, as the prospect may be of their conversion to Christ,

we still mark the progress of truth ; we still see the traces of the hand of God ; we keep fast hold of Divine promises ; we believe in the power of the grace of God.

May we not expect that, as the gospel becomes more generally understood by those who profess to believe it, and as its spirit shows itself more simply in their conduct, much of that which gave Mohammedanism its chief advantage in Arabia, and in the whole Byzantine empire, will disappear from all the countries of which the Moslems have any knowledge? It would show a want of faith in our own religion, not to see the necessity of this; not to desire it; not to hope for it; and we can scarcely be thoughtful and sincere if we are not ready to make any sacrifice by which it might be shown to be in our power to promote it.

It was the fault of men called Christians that, in a great degree, excited and fostered the religion of Mohammed, at the first. The speculative disputations—the heartless distractions—the wicked persecutions—the humiliating corruptions, of the eastern professors of our faith, had more to do than any other single cause, perhaps, in preparing the nations to tempt the warriors from Medina.

While we believe there may have been numerous instances of spiritual religion in the darkest times, we cannot forget what history has told us of the corruptions of superstition, and of the gross public evils, which prevailed among the people, who were the only people whom Mohammedans could look upon as Christians.

On the contrary, the enlightened piety, the spiritual union, the forbearing temper, the devout earnestness, and the faithful obedience, of the Christians from the west, may show the wearied Mohammedan a fairer specimen of what the religion of Christ can do. It can be no vain imagination to look forward to something of this kind. Time was, when Jewish bigotry was not too stubborn to bend to the religion of the cross. The haughty intellect of Greece did homage to the wisdom of those teachers, who, though they were Jews, went forth to teach the nations. Roman pride knelt, humbly and in tears, before the Son of God. The rude children of the hordes that carried devastation from their northern hive into the gardens of Europe, have been civilized by the peaceful message from Mount Olivet. The Anglo-Saxon race has spread the lights of

science, and the fruits of culture, through the forests of America; over the strands of India; and along the coasts and islands of China.

We devoutly believe that the only revenge which *our* DIVINE PROPHET breathes, will yet be taken on the descendants of the eastern conquerors, by blessing them with the true religion; and, in that religion, with all that makes governments secure, and nations happy. We are slow to think that such views are not accordant with the strain of prophecy; with the scope of revelation; and with the purposes of God. Without forgetting—nay, feeling more deeply than it might be appropriate to express in this place—that a higher agency than the purest work of the holiest Christians in their utmost union, is needed; has been promised; and must be sought by prayer;—we gladly hail, and we ardently encourage, every symptom of Christian attention to the east. The spices of Arabia breathe as sweet a fragrance now as when the poet said,

“ Many a league
Pleased with the grateful scent old Ocean smiles;”

and we see no ground for doubting, that a

richer incense from that noble people may yet go up to heaven.—Far from venturing to speak with confidence about the future, we put forth these views only as the prospects which such a survey as we can take of these interesting regions, and their antique monuments, has suggested, in connexion with what we know of the history of nations and of religions.

The dogmatism of some interpreters of prophecy offends; the ignorance of others can only disgust; but nothing is so offensive in either of these classes as the self-sufficient ignorance that tells us, with contempt, that the oracle is dumb, or that its voice has no interpreter. We shall see. We can wait. Meanwhile, it is no idle pastime, and it need not be an unprofitable speculation, to watch the progress of events:—taking heed to watch them so as to fulfil the duty of the day that passes over us; thus preparing ourselves, and, so far as our influence goes, preparing the nations of the east, for the day that is believed by Christians to be drawing nigh. A blast, more scorching than the *simoom*, may smite the powers that have trampled on the rights of kingdoms, and the faith of ages. But we hope that palm-

groves, and wells of water, are the images that best describe the years of peace, love, and joy, that are to follow for the millions of the children of the sun.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

ONE lesson, out of many, we may learn from the brief history that has now been sketched. **MOHAMMED WAS IN EARNEST.** The Saracens were earnest men. If earnestness produces such great effects in spreading delusion and misery through the world, it is worthy of reflection whether the lovers of truth, and the friends of human happiness, are sufficiently imbued with this spirit. A great German poet has said, "Earnestness is life." There is an earnestness which is fed by thought; which is guided by wisdom; which is urged by love; which sees things as they are; which feels how they ought to be; and which prompts the heart to many a fervent prayer, and the hand to many a deed of self-denying goodness.

This is the earnestness we want. And why can we not have it? Is there no fervency in youth? No firmness in intelligence? No

dignity in principle ? No sincerity in faith ? No buoyancy in hope ? If we retrace the birth of Mohammed, his flight, his zeal, his perseverance, his victories, we might put it to ourselves, personally, whether each of us may not, in our own sphere, begin, or, if it be begun, renew, a course of active devotion to the service of a true faith, and of a worthy Master.

We have a Book whose truth is sealed by miracles, and by the blood of martyrs ; a religion which turns the “curse into a blessing ;” a Saviour who pities, loves, redeems ; a hope which is pure and built upon a rock ; a calling which is clear, and honourable, and happy ; and we are moved by the deepest thoughts, and the holiest feelings, to live in earnest for our Saviour’s honour, and for the welfare of the world. Happy he, however small his talent or confined his sphere, who lives this earnest life. Streams shall meet him in the desert ; and his Lord is waiting to receive him, in the eternal gardens.

If, again, we retrace the springing up of those great armies that came from the eastern wilds to found the glittering empires of the Saracens, and Moguls, and Turks, there is a strong appeal made to our social sympathies. Greater armies, fighting with nobler weapons and

for nobler ends, might gather from the haunts of earnest Christians ; we might see the crescent fading in the light of that sun which is to arise and shine on all the earth, filling all things with the glory of the Son of God. Here is food for a sublime ambition. Here is a bond for the largest union which man has ever formed. Here are visions which might dazzle the brightest imagination. Here are hopes which may fill the saddest heart with joy, and nerve the feeblest hand to effort.

It is much that we have not had our minds poisoned, from childhood, with the fooleries, the sensualities, and the hateful spirit of the Korân. It is more, that our path has been in the light of the gospel, the only light that leads to life. For this we are accountable to God. It is too high a trust to be trifled with. It must not be trifled with. To trifle with it is to ruin ourselves. To trifle with it is to dishonour God, and to displease him. It is to act unfaithfully to our fellow-creatures, of whom we know not how many will be influenced, and may be injured, by us. Truly it is not a trifling age, this age in which we live. Noble are our opportunities, our inducements, our means ; then, noble be our plans, our sacri-

fices, and our achievements. What a sight would it not be to see the pilgrims of Mecca travelling through the wilderness of life with the words of Jesus on their lips, and his praises in their hearts ; to see the warrior turning his sword into a ploughshare, and his spear into a pruning-hook ; to see the Tartar from his wilds, the Indian from his plains, the Persian from his mountains, grasping his brother Christian's hand, in manly love, from the farthest regions of the west : the Korân forgotten, Mohammed forgotten ; but the word of God remembered, and the Son of God adored !

It is worthy of our best thoughts, to think on such a sight. To realize it, what more is wanting than our simple faith, our humble prayer, our fervent love, our union with all that believe, and our tender compassion, expressed by wise and persevering exertion in obedience to our Lord's command ? And what a sight ! Jesus Christ the Prophet—the Priest—the Conqueror ! To him they bring the gold, frankincense, and myrrh ! For him Poetry weaves her song ! At his feet, the pearls of the deep, and the gems of the cave, are cast ! On his head, Empire puts her crown ! Before him, the nations move in glad proces-

sion; and his presence is to them as the light of the morning: where the fig-tree blossoms or the olive, or the vine, every art of industry is brought from distant shores and valleys; and the fathers, and the mothers, and the little children, cheer the homes of earth by talking of that better world which is on high! Who would not wish to see it, and to share it?

We may not share it now. It may be long before we see it. But it is given to us to hope for it, and it is binding on us to hasten its approach. **EARNESTNESS** will bring it,—the earnestness of believing men, who are relying on the earnestness of God, who are praying to him for the blessing without which nothing can avail; and who are doing, simply and faithfully, what he has bid them do. We must not think that this will fail, till it has been tried. We have no fear that the trial will be made in vain. He who gives the spring in the desert, and the balm upon the hills, will not suffer us to faint. Let us be of good courage. But let us be *doing* something; diffusing the truth that shall dispel error; promoting the happiness that will sing for joy, where misery had wept; praying for the grace which turns the heart of man.

To fight for our religion is forbidden. Would that all Christians felt that it was equally forbidden to dispute for it in a fighting temper! But we are not forbidden to deny ourselves for it—to labour for it—to suffer for it—to die for it. There is a heroism peculiar to our holy faith—the heroism of meek endurance, and of patient toil. For this there must be earnest thought, and earnest prayer, and earnest action. Unlike the fiery spirits of Arabia, that were kindled by the enthusiasm of their false prophet, carrying the sword and the Korân with such amazing force and swiftness, through the affrighted nations of Asia, Africa, and Europe, we may glow with a gentler flame: catching the words and the spirit of the Son of God, who was “lowly in heart;” whose days were spent in doing works of mercy; and whose nights were wet with the dews of heaven, as he prayed with cries and tears on the cold ground. The power of LOVE IN EARNEST, is a glorious contrast to hatred set on fire of hell. It is this power of man of which the world stands most in need. They learned it not at Mecca, nor at Medina. We learn it at Gethsemane; on Calvary; in the gospel; from the depths of our hearts, when the love of Christ has touched them; from the

yearnings of our souls, when the crimes and miseries of men appeal to us.

Such hearts become the disciples and the champions of the cross. Reader, are you one of these disciples? of these champions will you be one? The Master calls you. Listen to his voice. Live on; live ever to him; and to him only. He is worthy of your loyalty. He stoops to accept it. He will not suffer it to pass unnoticed. He will graciously reward it. Of Mohammed and his companions, what is the best that can be said? The master died of lingering poison. His earliest friend, who took the vacant throne, was in the arms of death when Khaled took Damascus. Khaled—the brave, disinterested, noble savage—was suspected and insulted by his people, till they broke his heart. Omar was stabbed by an assassin. Othman was murdered by rebels. Ali was pierced, even in the temple, by a poisoned dagger. Where are they now?

But your crucified Lord is risen from the dead. He dieth no more. He sits on a throne of glory. He will give a crown of life to all who love him. Instead of a religion which deceived, and an empire which is fading fast away, you have a religion which raises you to God; and you shall

inherit a kingdom that can never be destroyed. Did those bright and hearty men commit their lives on such a venture, meeting death in so much bitterness, for a shadow, and an everlasting disappointment? And will not you gird up your loins and rise with equal ardour to glorify a Leader who has bought you with his blood, and who has promised glory, and honour, and immortality? Did they believe a falsehood; and will not *you* believe the truth? Did they trust in a deceiver; and will not *you* trust in Him who cannot lie? Did they brave the rock and the desert—hunger and thirst, and sickness and horrid deaths—to force dominion on their fellow-men; and will *you* think the sacrifice too costly, or the effort too great, by which you help to lead the world in willing homage to your Saviour's feet?

You need not make a pilgrimage. Your whole life is a pilgrimage—not to Mecca—not to Jerusalem, but to the grave! There it ends. Cold though the passage be, it is but for a moment. Then, all is over; all fear—danger—sorrow—dying. No Arabian images could paint the joys that then await you. Too pure for earthly sense, and too great for human imagination, they outstrip all our

thoughts, and they soar beyond the reach of our most winged hopes. Never shall you tread the burning sand again ; never feel the scorching sunbeam ; never thirst ; but your inheritance shall be with saints, in light ; and you shall worship in the temple, which is filled with the glory of God and of the Lamb.

Such is the contrast between all false religions and the true. As the life of Mohammed imbued with his principles and his spirit the fiery-hearted soldiers of the east, so, but in a higher sense, "the life of Jesus is to be made manifest in our mortal flesh." To feel the quickening impulse of that life, as the Spirit of Christ dwells in us, is the high privilege of Christians. To show, by our own living, the manner of Christ's living in this world, is the business and the testimony of our personal character. To lead the dying multitudes around us to know and love Him who is the "Light of the world," and "the Life of men," is the sacred object of our ambition. And, when He cometh to raise the dead, and to take the living with him to the mansions of his Father's house, his glory will be the glory of his faithful followers. Like Him in the strength and beauty of immortal bodies, in the purity and blessedness of ran-

somed spirits, and in the dignity and splendour of an everlasting royalty, his companions shall rejoice for ever, that the Prophet in whom *they* believed was true, that the Leader whom they followed is triumphant. Reader! believe—follow—and partake the triumph!



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